PLEADINGS OF THE SACRED HEART

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PLEADINGS

OF THE

SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

From the French,

BY THE REV. M. COMERFORD.

"Let us, therefore, love God, because God first hath loved us."—1 EP. ST. JOHN iv. 19.

SECOND EDITION.

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE ought not to be, nor do we believe there is, any need of an apology for presenting, in an English form, a little work that has already secured the approbation of two distinguished bishops.*

But a preface to an English edition seems, to the Translator, to present a very suitable occasion for saying, on the subject of devotion to the Sacred Heart, a few words that may have the effect of rendering that devotion more universal, by explaining more clearly its important place amongst the devotions of the Church —its object, its motive, and the theological basis on which it rests.

A "Catholic devotion" sanctioned by the Church is no mere outcome of sentimental piety. It is no mere expression of devotional enthusiasm. It is something very real, something very solid. If it be a blossom with brilliant hue and fragrant perfume, it is a blossom of a noble tree that rears its branches as high as Heaven, and has its roots as deep as the faith that is the life of the Church. A Catholic devotion is always, in its ultimate analysis, the expression of a Catholic dogma; and many a theological conclusion which, to untrained intellects, might appear obscure in its technical wording, makes itself a home amongst the humblest of the faithful when it expresses itself in one of those practical devotions which, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, take, as if by storm, the hearts of a people.

So it is with devotion to the Sacred Heart. It is a devotion that cannot be understood without an accurate knowledge of the mystery of the Incarnation, cannot be practised without securing for those who cultivate it an ever-growing love for our Incarnate Lord.

* Mgrs. Giraud and Croizier, Bishops of Rodez.

When this has been said, when it has been asserted that the two results of this devotion are wider knowledge and deeper love of our Blessed Lord, we feel that enough has been said to convey to Christian hearts a due sense of its importance.

It is desirable to understand precisely what the Church means by that devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to which she has given her warmest approbation and her most solemn sanction.

By a "special devotion" is ordinarily meant a certain honor or worship paid to some particular sacred person, or sacred thing, for some special reason. Hence, to explain fully the nature of the special devotion to the Sacred Heart, we must lay down three things. First, the object of this devotion; second, the motive, or, in other words, the reason, which induces us to pay this special honor to this special object; third, the nature or character of this special honor.

1. The object of this devotion is the Sacred Heart of Jesus—that is, the material Heart of flesh that beat within His breast; the Heart that was formed at the moment of the Incarnation from the most pure blood of His Immaculate Mother; the Heart that was pierced on Calvary, and that is now enthroned as part of the Sacred Humanity, at the right hand of His Father in Heaven; the Heart that from the first moment in which "The Word was made Flesh," was the Heart of the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity.

2. The motive of this devotion, or the special reason for selecting the Sacred Heart as the object of a special devotion, is, that (1) this Sacred Heart was set forth by Christ Himself, as the peculiar seat of those virtues in which He specially desired that men should imitate Him. "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of *heart*" (Matt. xi. 29). (2) Because, by the consent of mankind, expressed in the received usage of every language, the *heart* has always been selected as the symbol of love. Hence, the Heart of Jesus is the symbol of that unbounded love which caused him to do and to suffer so many things for the redemption of men; led Him to die on Calvary, and to leave us Himself in that ineffable Sacrament that has well been called the Sacrament of Love. (3) Because this Sacred Symbol is in itself eminently calculated to cultivate and keep alive the memory of

His Sacred Passion, and to prompt us to make a return of love and gratitude to that Divine Lord Who, for love of us, "humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

Hence, taking these two together—the object and the motive—the honor we pay to the Sacred Heart, in this devotion, is paid to that Sacred Heart, both considered *in itself* and, at the same time, considered as a symbol of the love of Jesus.

3. Finally, this honor, or, as it is theologically termed, this special *cultus*, is the supreme and absolute adoration, due to God alone, and which, in this devotion, is paid to the Sacred Heart, inasmuch as it is the Sacred Heart of a Divine Person, from which Person it neither is nor ever can be separated.

From all this it will be seen that special devotion to the Sacred Heart has been, as it were, inaugurated by our Lord Himself in that sublime sentence, which contains in itself the whole philosophy of Christian life: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart." It will be seen that it is based on the dogmatic teaching of the Church, on the mystery of the Incarnation; that it is a devotion eminently calculated to bring home to the hearts of the faithful the abstruse conclusions of theology on the subject of the Hypostatic Union; and, finally, that it is a devotion admirably adapted to lead men to the love of Jesus, by the avenue of those natural feelings that God has planted in the human heart, and has intended to be the foundation on which grace may erect the edifice of that supernatural life which the Church of God is the divinely-appointed instrument in conferring, in preserving, and in crowning with everlasting happiness.

When a devotion has once made itself a home in the Church, when it has been consecrated by the approbation of Supreme Pontiffs, and been crowned by the spontaneous affection of the faithful, Catholics may safely, nay, must necessarily, conclude that, in the Providence of God, it has a special mission to fulfil, a particular work to do, in the age in which it is manifested.

If one evil more than another is manifested in the world of our unhappy time, it is not so much, as in other days, speculative errors, which might be called heresies of the intellect, but rather the result of long

courses of intellectual error, developing into their natural consequence—corruption of the will.

Love has grown cold. The world has become indifferent to dogma, and corrupt in morals.

What two lessons, consequently, have more need to be impressed upon those who, amidst this indifference and corruption, strive to live the supernatural life of Christianity, than the lesson of Humility and the lesson of Meekness? Of humility—that real self-knowledge that teaches a man his true place in the order of creation, and teaches, consequently, the reasonableness and the necessity of submitting his intellect to God's teaching, and of conforming his will to God's commandments. Of meekness—that is, so to speak, the natural bearing of one who, profoundly convinced of the supreme dominion of God over the warring elements of evil, can afford to leave the final issues of all earthly things in His Omnipotent Hand; that can, in the degree that is permitted to a creature, partake of His infinite patience, and can so present to the "Gentiles who rage, and the peoples who devise vain things," the spectacle of a man, uncomplaining indeed, but "just and steadfast in his purpose"; such a man as even the Pagan Poet could deem sublime, but who is a thousandfold more worthy of admiration when the justice which he loves is the justice of God, and the purposes to which he clings have the basis of the Infallible teaching of the Church of Christ.

And these lessons are, of all others, the special lessons of the Sacred Heart.

FIRST DAY.

Jesus invites us to consecrate these Days to His Honor.

"GIVE ear to Me, you that follow that which is just, and you that seek the Lord." "Incline your ear and come to Me: hear, and your soul shall live" (Is. li. 1; lv. 3). "I have loved you with an everlasting love" (Jer. xxxi. 3), "and I desire your happiness immeasurably beyond what you can comprehend. I came into the world, and the world knew me not; I came unto my own, and my own received me not" (John i.) Even still I dwell on earth in that Sacrament wherein love has held Me captive, and yet, even here, men slight Me and forget Me. Ingrates! they readily think of all things else, of parents, benefactors, friends, of every trifling affair connected with this miserable, fleeting world; but on Me, their God, their Creator, their Saviour, they hardly pass a thought! And yet what have I not done for them? I have become a victim of the most intense and tender love, and they abandon Me as a stranger amidst a people to whom I am not known. They rarely visit me, and, when they do, they seem to grudge Me the little space of time that custom or positive obligation compels them to spend before My tabernacle. Not

only this, but they deliberately offend Me, and wilfully shut their eyes to the consequences of their sinful conduct. They slight the Heaven I offer and brave the Hell I threaten. They banish, as an importunate remembrance, every thought of that great sacrifice which I have undergone to save them; they turn away from the Crucifix which portrays the bloody heroism of My love, and abandon My Sacred Heart to the angels who surround It and the faithful few whose delight it is to honor It and to fulfil the holy lessons which It teaches. Take your place, My child, amongst this faithful band so dear to Me. Let me hold in your regard the place which the miserable interests of this passing world usurp in the hearts of so many cold, insensate, and blinded beings, and you shall be a precious recompense for the loss of the affections of those unhappy souls who prefer the "troubled waters" of iniquity to the "river of living waters" of which I am the Source, and the gross pleasures of this life to the pure delights of my love. Consecrate, then, to My Divine Heart these coming thirty-three days, in honor of the years I passed on earth, and in reparation for the forgetfulness and the insults which even My own children are daily and hourly guilty of. Do you think this, My child, too much for Me to ask in proof of your sincere and abiding devotion to that Heart that has so loved you, that loves you now so tenderly, and desires nothing more ardently than your future and eternal happiness?

REFLECTION.—Alas! in giving to my Jesus what He asks of me, what shall I have done that can in the least degree be commensurate with what I owe him? How comes it that I do not respond with the utmost alacrity to this sweet and tender invitation? I, who have so much to atone for, and who am so weak, so tepid, and so destitute of virtues or merits of any kind. O my soul! bless and thank your Saviour for giving you a means whereby to supply for all your shortcomings. Behold in His merits all that will satisfy for all your debts, cure all your ills, fortify you against your enemies, and make you worthy of heaven. My good Jesus never suffers Himself to be outdone in generosity; if, therefore, I give myself during this time unreservedly to His love, He, in return, will bestow on me a superabundant infusion of His grace, and especially the inestimable gift of His love—that *precious pearl*, that *hidden treasure* spoken of in the Gospel, that one thing necessary, without which all things else are as nothing, and, having which, we possess all that the most aspiring ambition can desire.

PRACTICE.—1. Resolve to visit the Sacred Heart each day, for the twofold object of honoring Its love for men and making reparation for their ingratitude.

2. Perform each day some little act of mortification for the same intention. The Heart of Jesus prizes the love that prompts the act more than the act itself.

EXAMPLE.

Pious Sentiments of a Soul wholly devoted to Jesus.

Mademoiselle Victorine de Galard Terraube, who died in 1836, after a life devoted to the service of the sorrowful and afflicted, was penetrated with poignant grief on account of the forgetfulness and ingratitude of men towards the Heart of Jesus. This sensitiveness about the interest of Jesus is a special grace almost incomprehensible to ordinary souls, and is granted only to those who are inflamed with Divine love. "It strikes me forcibly and painfully," she writes, "how every one can find tender hearts to love them, and my Jesus only is unloved; others are felt for, but my Jesus finds none to sympathize with Him in His loneliness! When I think on this, I confess I feel my, alas! too feeble love reanimated, and I conceive a desire to consecrate myself without reserve to this good Saviour, begging of Him to take up His abode in my poor heart, and banish from it all that could displease Him." The ingratitude of men towards a God who has so loved them, the blindness of sinners, the indifference of even the just, the sight of the crimes with which the world is inundated—these were the subject of many bitter tears to Victorine, shed in the presence of her Lord. With deepest sorrow she saw faith banished from the hearts of many of her countrymen, and the religion of their ancestors become almost unknown to the

greater number. She beheld with grief its precepts openly violated and its solemnities profaned in the most impious manner. But that which grieved her still more keenly was to find that even amongst pious souls—those whose prayers and virtues could alone arrest the terrible but just vengeance of an offended God—there were but few who appeared adequately to recognize the boundless love of our Divine Jesus; fewer still who thought of making that reparation which it seemed to her should be their continual employment. Let us adopt the example of this fervent soul, and seek to love our Lord in proportion as He is forgotten and outraged by others. Let Him not have cause to repeat of us His touching complaint, "I looked for one that would comfort Me, and I found none" (Ps. lxviii.)—*Life of Mlle. V. de Galard Terraube.*

SECOND DAY.

The Claims which Jesus has on our Hearts.

My child, you do not love Me. I do not say that you love Me not as I love you—could you do so?—but what I say is that you do not love Me as much as you could and ought. Alas! is it not true that your love for poor creatures, which are but the faint reflection of My perfections, far exceeds that which you feel for Me? Reflect upon the injustice and ingratitude of this. What work of My Hands, however per-

fect, can bear comparison with Me, its Creator? In what creature have you found any excellence that does not at once fade away when compared with my ineffable perfections? To what creature are you indebted as you are to Me? I have created you to My own image and likeness; I have provided innocent pleasures for you in this world wherein I have placed you, that you may render yourself deserving of a better, an eternal inheritance. I have given you all that you possess; you are My chosen vine; none other has any right to you. All this I did for you, whose ingratitude I foresaw, and whose negligences, sins, and outrages I counted from eternity. With the full knowledge of the base return I should receive, see what I have done for you. For you I abased Myself even to the form of a servant; for you I was born in a stable; for you I endured the pains and hardships of flight and exile; for you I was obedient to my own creatures; for you I bore with the calumnies and persecutions of the Jews; for you I was bathed in a bloody sweat in the Garden of Olives; for you My flesh was torn to shreds by the blows of the cruel scourges; for you I gave Myself up as a holocaust to be nailed to the tree of the Cross; for you I died the most painful death, and now, risen again, I live for you in heaven, offering continually in your behalf the glorious stigmas of My Wounds inflicted for your salvation. For you, also, I abide still in the Blessed Sacrament, in which I am become your food and

drink. Open your eyes, and behold what I am to you, and what you are compared with what you ought to be to Me. Be you yourself the judge between us, and at least acknowledge the justice of my undoubted claims.

REFLECTION.—Have I not hitherto disregarded the claims of the Heart of Jesus? I belong to Him by inalienable right, and yet, alas! how often have I not practically denied His claims for the sake of my guilty passions! Even still by how many thoughts, desires, words, and actions do I not rob Him of the love and honor so justly His? For the future I resolve to be wholly His; to live only for Him to whom only I belong. Oh! may I be able henceforth to say with the Apostle, "I live. now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii.)

PRACTICE.—1. Say frequently, and especially when tempted to sin, "O my Jesus! be Thou ever my Lord and my God."

2. Always pronounce the sacred name of Jesus with profound respect and tender love, remembering His numberless claims upon your duty and love.

EXAMPLE.

St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi; her ardent Love for Jesus.

From the early age of nine years, this Saint was inflamed with so ardent a desire to love and serve our Lord that all worldly amusements became to her most irksome and unin-

viting. Her only real happiness was in holding loving converse with her Divine Master or in publishing His glory. It would be impossible to describe the extent and intensity of her devotion to the B. Sacrament. She longed even to be near those who had received Holy Communion, so sensibly did she feel the presence of Jesus Christ. Consecrated to her Divine Spouse by her profession as a Carmelite Nun, she received a considerable increase of graces; and so ardent were the affections of her heart, she often could not contain her transports, but would exclaim, "O Love! how is it that You are not loved or known by Your creatures? O my Jesus! why have I not a voice loud enough to be heard at the extremities of the earth, that I might publish everywhere that Thy love ought to be known, loved, and esteemed as the only real good?" At other times she would call on all created things to transform themselves into so many tongues to love, praise, and glorify the immense treasure of Divine love. She shed tears continually for the conversion of sinners; and when her prayers were interrupted by the necessity of taking some rest, she often exclaimed, "How can I repose when I consider how grievously my God is being offended on earth? O Jesus! I only take this rest through obedience and to conform myself to Thy holy will." Nothing could interrupt her union with God. It was enough to hear His name pronounced to fill her with the most lively trans-

ports of love. She continually and with incredible fervor repeated the Doxology, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," and bowed down when she heard it said, offering herself without reserve to Him from whom she had received so much. In all things she considered alone the holy will of God, and her whole desire was to act in perfect conformity with it. "How great is our happiness!" she would say to her sisters in religion. "What a wonderful exchange do we make with God, and one always to our advantage, when we act from the sole desire of honoring and pleasing Him!" "Come," she would say at other times, "come, love your God, who has so loved you. O Love! I die of grief when I see You so little known and valued! O Love! my Love, if You know not where else to repose, come to me, and I will receive and honor You. O souls created to love! why do you not fulfil your destiny?"—*Life of St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, by Godescard.*

THIRD DAY.

Jesus our God.

My child, "I am the Lord thy God." Before I assumed the name of Jesus, it was I who said to Moses, "I am who am." It was I who, as Creator of all things, said, "Let there be light, and there was light." It was I who drew from nothingness all that exists or lives; at

My word all created things sprang into existence, and gave praise to their Creator; I extended the heavens as a covering, and directed the various and harmonious movements of the universe, and established the order which unceasingly publishes My Wisdom, Knowledge, and Power. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made." "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Apoc. xxii. 13). I am the consubstantial Image of the Father, the Splendor of His glory. With My immensity I fill the heavens and the earth, the depths of the ocean, and the abyss of hell. Yet all perfect and infinite that I am, "My delight is to be with the children of men." The more mankind humble themselves before Me, the more do I descend to them, and, miserable and sinful though they be, lift them up even to union with My Divinity. The more profoundly they humble themselves for My honor, the more intimately do I unite Myself to them by the bonds of love, and make them taste and feel how sweet the Lord is, giving them to comprehend that nothing less than Myself can ever fully realize their hopes, satisfy their desires, or fill their hearts.

REFLECTION.—Jesus is my God. Have I tried to realize the greatness of this truth? Have I got to understand this infinite con-

descension in stooping to my lowliness, and the profound adoration I owe to Him for deigning to bestow on me a look of tenderness and love? Oh! if I only bore constantly in mind that Jesus, my God, is near to me, is within me, and pleads for my love, with what respect for His Divine presence would I not be filled! If I only kept this great truth steadily in view, with what prudence and circumspection would I not at all times regulate my every thought and act, and with what earnestness would I not employ myself in pouring out my soul before him in fervent and repeated aspirations of devotedness and love!

PRACTICE.—1. Walk constantly in the presence of that God who for your sake has taken to Himself a human nature and a human heart like yours. "Walk before Him, and be perfect." 2. Adopt the salutary habit of making all creatures remind you of His presence, as they all proclaim His glory and the splendor of His adorable perfections.

EXAMPLE.

St. Vincent de Paul's constant Recollection of the Presence of God.

Such was St. Vincent's recollection of the presence of God that a holy priest who knew him intimately says that he seemed never to be forgetful of it even for an instant. No matter what amount of business he had on hand,

he was always recollected, always master of himself. Before answering a question, particularly if on an important subject, it was remarked that he invariably paused for a little time, during which he raised his mind to God to implore light and grace, that he might not advise otherwise than in accordance with God's holy will and for His greater honor and glory. Even whilst he walked through the streets of Paris, his mind was continually communing with his God. It was his practice to bare his head each time the clock struck the hour, and make the sign of the cross. He stated that he found this habit most useful in keeping himself mindful of the presence of God and of the good resolutions he had formed at his morning meditation. With his experience of the graces and advantages resulting from interior recollection, he urged others to labor for its attainment. For that purpose he had painted in great letters, in the cloisters of St. Lazare, "God sees you," and he frequently declared that any one who faithfully attended to the presence of God should quickly attain to a high degree of holiness. The most commonplace objects served to direct his thoughts to God; he beheld God in all things, and made use of them to unite him more perfectly with their Divine Creator. When he beheld the fields rich with corn, or the trees laden with fruit, he took occasion from them to admire the inexhaustible bounty of God, and to adore and bless His paternal

care and providence. When he looked upon flowers or other beautiful objects, he repeated in his heart that which was afterwards found written by his own hand: What can be compared to the beauty of God, who is the Source of all created perfection? Is it not from Him that the flowers, the birds, the stars, the sun and moon, derive their beauty and lustre?—*Life of St. Vincent de Paul, by Abelly.*

FOURTH DAY.

The Ineffable Goodness of the Heart of Jesus.

I have conversed with you, My child, concerning My Divinity, but yet what I have said of it is as nothing compared with the reality. To obtain somewhat of an adequate idea of it, you should forget this world, and ascend to the blessed abode of My saints; even were I to elevate you, like St. Paul, to the third heaven, the dazzling splendor of the Deity would so overpower your weak nature as that your soul would be immeasurably dismayed and confused. Accommodating Myself, therefore, to your weakness, and for your consolation, I was made man. In your miserable condition you could never have come to Me; I have, consequently, come down to you by assuming human nature, and by taking to Myself a Heart like yours, whose great desire is a loving union with you. Oh! if you would but know that your heart was created for My Heart, and how

earnestly I yearn for your love! It is this that directs My eyes with loving tenderness on you, and reminds Me that you are the redeemed of My blood, the child of My sorrow, become so at the sacrifice of My life. It is this that keeps My ears attentive to your sighs, and ever ready to hearken to your petitions. It is this that causes My words to abound with the *wine* of strength and the *oil* of charity, relieving your anxieties, infirmities, and sorrows, and gently healing your wounds, however deep or painful they may be. It is this affection of My Heart for you that prompts My outstretched Hand to strengthen and sustain you, to raise you up when fallen, and to guide your tottering steps in the path that leads to heaven. It is this, in fine, that inclines Me to listen to your protestations of sorrow and repentance, and, forgetting your former ingratitude, to draw you to myself in the sweet embrace of mercy and of love. Does your love, My child, in any degree correspond with Mine?

REFLECTION.—How can we resist the touching appeal of the loving Heart of Jesus for our love? In giving my miserable heart, I give but little indeed, and I receive in return a gift beyond all gifts—no other than Jesus himself, the delight of the saints—and with it a pledge also of eternal happiness hereafter. Nothing is more natural than to love a kind, compassionate, and devoted friend. We ought not, then, to find it a hard duty; on the contrary, we ought to be

drawn irresistibly, as it were, and with a sweet attraction, to love the ever-loving and devoted Heart of Jesus. Alas! that I should have so long refused Him mine, so long resisted the tender pleading of His love! Alas! that at times I should have divided this poor heart of mine between Him and creatures, or, having given it, have afterwards recalled the gift! Oh! never again shall I resist or be inconstant to His love. Be it my motto for the time to come, in sorrow, in joy, in life or death—Jesus, and only Jesus.

PRACTICE.—1. Bring home fully to yourself the consoling fact that Jesus thinks continually of you, and watches over you unceasingly, and that His adorable Heart is ever ready to hear your prayers and console you in your sorrows. 2. Adopt the pious usage of many holy souls of adoring the Sacred Heart of Jesus at nine o'clock in the morning and four o'clock in the evening, offering to It the fervent homage of your liveliest affections.

EXAMPLE.

Tender Devotion of the Saints to the Heart of Jesus.

The saints have made it their delight to choose the Sacred Heart of Jesus for their refuge, and they have expressed in language the most touching their tender devotion to this treasure of charity. St. Bonaventure envied the lance which opened the Divine Heart on Calvary, and cried out in a transport of love,

"Oh! had I been in its place, I should never have withdrawn, but would have said, Behold the place of my repose for ever; here will I fix my dwelling, the dwelling of my predilection and choice." "Let us approach," says St. Bernard, "let us tremble and be ravished with joy at the contemplation of the Sacred Heart! Oh! how good, how delicious, it is to dwell in this Divine Heart! Your Heart, my Jesus, has been opened to offer us a safe asylum, and has been pierced, so that by this external wound we might understand the invisible wounds inflicted by love. Who, then, can refuse to love this Heart so wounded?" St. Francis of Assisi, as was revealed to the Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, lived in constant, intimate union with this Adorable Heart, and obtained from it many most special graces. St. Francis de Sales made his continual abode in this sanctuary of love, and the peace he here found could not be disturbed by even the most distracting and incessant occupations. St. Mechtilde, St. Gertrude, St. Catharine of Siena, St. Clare, St. Ignatius, St. Teresa, St. Francis Xavier, and many other saints, had also a particular devotion to the Sacred Heart, and their lives were remarkable for their union with God. St. Aloysius Gonzaga attained to that perfection of the interior life and union with God which were the distinctive marks of his sanctity by the practice of this devotion. In the year 1765 a novice of the Society of Jesus, named Nicholas

Celestine, was attacked by a dangerous illness, and, being in what seemed his agony, St. Aloysius appeared to him, and addressed him in the most consoling terms, exhorting him to love the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to propagate devotion to It, which, he assured him, would be most pleasing to God. Nicholas promised he would do so, and in recompense was miraculously restored to health.—*A.M.D.G., Month of the Sacred Heart.*

FIFTH DAY.

Amiability of Jesus during His Life on Earth.

"If I could but have seen and heard Jesus when He dwelt on earth, oh! how much would I have loved Him, and with what delight would I have hung upon His words!" Such, My child, are sometimes your feelings and expressions. But do you forget that I have left you the sacred record of My life replete with the sweet majesty of the Man-God and the winning unction of His words? Why do you not learn to read the pages of My Gospel with faith and love? You have Me there described in characters as true as they are touching. You see there portrayed My goodness, compassion, zeal, and charity. I am in turn the Good Shepherd, the vigilant and bountiful Master, and the tender Parent. You find Me there making Myself all to all, imparting milk to babes, and solid food to the more advanced, and translating

divine science and wisdom into language suited to the capacity of all. I show Myself throughout as the Consoler of the afflicted and the Redresser of every ill; I feed the hungry, I raise up the poor and lowly, to whom, by preference, I first announced the joyful tidings of redemption; I strengthen the weak, I encourage the timid, I watch over and pray for sinners, you, My child, included, who have opposed so many obstacles to My grace. I shed tears over obdurate hearts, and go about unceasingly through towns and villages, doing good to all. All these have I done to satisfy the cravings of My Heart, which overflowed with pity, mercy, benevolence, and love for all. Is it not true, My child, that if a fellow-creature had done anything like this for you, you could not even help loving him? And yet you will not yield to the love of My Divine Heart! Am I changed because I am no longer visible on earth? Ah! why are you so cold, so indifferent?

REFLECTION.—It is, unfortunately, true; I am but too little affected by the amiability of Jesus, Who came into the world to manifest the infinite love of the Eternal Father for mankind. The sublime pathos of the Sacred Scriptures has touched the hearts of even the most impious and incredulous, and I can read of all that Jesus has done to win my love, and yet be little moved! I behold Him there revealed as the most amiable of the sons of men, exercising all the Divine perfections to gain my heart, and

still I resist, still I fail to love Him above all things, as He so justly deserves!

PRACTICE.—1. When you perceive in any of God's creatures something that claims your admiration, recollect that they are but the faint reflection of their Creator, and that the highest degree of virtue attainable by mortals is not to be compared to the perfection of every virtue in Jesus. 2. Never read a portion of the Holy Gospel without reanimating your faith and rekindling your love towards your Divine Redeemer.

EXAMPLE.

Brother Moses, a Trappist lay brother, was remarkable for his constant recollection of Him whom the angels adore and serve. Town or country, cloister, refectory, or dormitory, were all, as it were, so many churches, wherein he unceasingly gave praise to God, and enjoyed His Divine presence. He converted his studies into so many prayers and meditations, and experienced unspeakable sweetness and consolation in reading the life and precepts of his beloved Saviour, as recorded in the Holy Gospel, worshipping Him with all the powers of his soul at almost every line. A single chapter often gave him occupation for days, and he found it impossible to proceed more rapidly, so deeply was he absorbed in devotional feelings towards his all-powerful and merciful Redeemer. Though but little versed

in secular learning, he still was able to appreciate the sublime beauty of the Sacred Scriptures better than the most learned; in this fulfilling the words of our Lord Himself, "Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones" (Matt. xi.) This fervent and holy soul desired no other light than that of grace, no other guide than that of his great faith. "Men are foolish," he used to say, holding in his hand the New Testament, "to consult and study so many books; let them be only docile and faithful in following the instructions of our Divine Master, and they will soon become wise disciples. Were we but to read the words of our Blessed Lord with the fervent dispositions of the early Christians, we should no longer manifest indifference or distaste for this heavenly nourishment." Then, raising the sacred volume, he continued, "Yes, Divine Jesus, I believe and reverence Thy words contained in this book, and, by the study of its maxims, I hope to enjoy hereafter Thy sweet presence in heaven." Sentiments well worthy of a St. Augustine or a St. Bernard!—*From the Lives of the Monks of La Trappe.*

SIXTH DAY.

The Amiability of the Doctrine of Jesus.

A voice was heard in the desert preaching penance, and announcing, at the same time,

the coming of the Desired of nations. All flocked to hear the words of John, and were so filled with admiration that many believed him to be the Messiah. But John said, "There hath stood One in the midst of you, whom you know not; the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose" (John i.) Soon was heard in the towns and villages a Voice still more august, full of sweetness, tenderness, and dignity. All Judea was moved, and pressed to hear him, forgetting even hunger and thirst whilst listening to His heavenly doctrine. Even My enemies were constrained to admit that "never did man speak like to this." I said, "I am not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true." "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink." "Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you." "Take up My yoke, and learn of Me to be meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest for your souls." "I am come, that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly." "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you; for every one that asketh receiveth." "I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep." "I am the Resurrection and the Life." "I am the Bread of Life that cometh down from Heaven." "Suffer little children to come to Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." "Whoso-

ever shall do the will of God, he is My brother and My sister and My mother." Thus spoke I a language till then unknown on earth. I taught that happiness was to be sought for in heaven, and was not to be found in this miserable, fleeting, and uncertain life. . . . How often, My child, have I not spoken in this self-same language to your heart, either through the upbraidings of your own conscience or the inspirations of My grace! How many times have you not heard My voice in the exhortations of the ordained ministers of My Word, or in the mute but potent examples of my faithful servants! And yet is it not true that you have not hearkened to it, but have turned slightingly and ungratefully away? How often have I not filled your soul with a longing to become better, and thereby more happy, and yet you have repulsed Me, and turned thanklessly a deaf ear to My inspirations!

REFLECTION.—It would put me to shame to be accused of spurning the advice of a fellow-mortal who had a claim on my gratitude and obedience; and still I dare to resist my God. I reject His grace, and I disobey His commands, by which He would have me become like to Him, in order to be worthy to share the joys of His heavenly kingdom. By my unfaithfulness to grace I have deserved to be abandoned to my unruly passions, to my blindness and frailty. And still my loving Saviour seeks after me, and, through His great charity, appeals to my heart

to have pity on myself by resigning myself to the influence of His love. Can I longer hesitate? No, my Saviour, my beloved Jesus, I resolve to be Thine now and for ever. I will henceforth be faithful to Thy inspirations and wholly devoted to Thy service, both for time and eternity.

PRACTICE.—1. Hearken with prompt docility to the voice of Jesus calling on you to serve and honor Him in all your thoughts, words, and actions. 2. Carefully shun all that would pain His Sacred Heart, and make frequent acts of love, gratitude, and reparation, copying in your conduct Him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

EXAMPLE.

St. Vincent de Paul, a faithful Imitator of Jesus.

St. Vincent labored continually to render his life conformable as much as possible to that of Jesus, the Divine Model. One of his brethren has said of him, "The love Vincent had for our Saviour was so great and universal that he seemed never, even for a moment, to lose the recollection of his sweet presence. We all remarked that he never spoke without in some way alluding to some act or expression of our Saviour. We often had reason to admire the manner in which he quoted the life and example of our Blessed Lord in all he advised and recommended. An old priest, who knew him in-

timately for nearly fifty years, stated as his conviction that Vincent was the most perfect imitator of Jesus he had ever known, and that he never knew him to do anything without having first considered the will of Him who is proposed as the Model for all (John xiii. 15). In his conferences with those whom he placed in offices of importance, he constantly and particularly recommended that, when called upon to decide or advise, they should reflect and say to themselves, "How would our Saviour have spoken or acted on such an occasion? Dear Jesus, inspire me now to speak and act as you would have me do; of myself I can do nothing." One of the priests of his congregation, being asked what he considered to be Vincent's greatest virtue, replied that it was his constant imitation of Jesus Christ, whom he had ever in view, that had raised him to such perfection, and was the most remarkable of his many virtues. Our Saviour was his book, his mirror, in which he ever sought to discern what was most pleasing to the Almighty; and having by prayer and meditation assured himself of how Jesus Christ would have acted in the circumstances, he acted promptly and confidently in accordance with the conclusion he had come to, firmly convinced that he could not otherwise do good or please God, who has made our perfection to consist in our making ourselves conformable to the likeness of His Divine Son.—*Life of St. Vincent de Paul, by Abelly.*

SEVENTH DAY.

Parables of our Lord.

"I am the Truth." My words, My child, are ever the faithful expression of My feelings. To understand My words is to see My heart laid bare. Listen, then, whilst I repeat what I formerly addressed to the children of Israel, in order to bring them back to God. I had you also, at the time, in My thoughts, and it was for your instruction as much as theirs that I made use of these words:

"What woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbors, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost" (Luke xv.)

Listen again:

"What man of you that hath an hundred sheep, and, if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, lay it on his shoulders rejoicing; and coming home, call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost" (Luke xv.)

Hear Me still:

"A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father: Father,

give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance. And not many days after, the younger son, gathering all together, went into a far country, and there wasted his substance, living riotously. And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want. And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no one gave unto him. And returning to himself, he said: How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger? I will arise and will go to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee; I am not now worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. And rising up, he came to his father. And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and, running to him, fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him: Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee; I am not now worthy to be called thy son. And the father said to his servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry, because this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost and is found" (Luke xv.)

In these passages, My child, you have read your own history; you have read it with perhaps but little emotion. Oh! why, My child, this great insensibility? Why this want of affection for Me, Who love you so tenderly, and will ever love you if you are but faithful to My love? You know that I will never abandon you unless you wilfully withdraw yourself from Me, and expel Me from your heart.

REFLECTION.—Could the Heart of Jesus express itself in more beautiful, more touching, or more tender words? Why, then, does not my heart at once melt with gratitude and love? Why do I not give to this good Pastor and Father that grateful affection which would raise the soul above the world and self, and attach it inseparably to God? What is it my Jesus asks of me? *My love.* And what do I owe him for so many blessings and favors? *Love.* Is it so difficult a thing to love the Sovereign Good —to love Him whose love of me has been from eternity, and Who will never cease to love me, unless it be through my own deliberate fault? Ought not the love of Jesus be, on the contrary, a duty the most natural and delightful?

PRACTICE.—1. When you see a fellow-creature straying in the fatal ways of sin, say to yourself, I, too, have strayed from my good Master and Father; but He has mercifully sought me out, and restored me to His favor. How can I ever evince gratitude equal to such great mercy? 2. Each day give thanks to the

Sacred Heart of Jesus for the grace of conversion, and pray for those unhappy souls who are still immersed in sin; pray for them with earnestness and fervor, without which dispositions your petitions can be of but little avail.

EXAMPLE.

The Atheist Converted.—Admirable Sentiments of a Heart truly grateful to God.

Monsieur Delauro-Dubez had grown gray in the honorable discharge of the duties connected with an official position of great distinction, but, unfortunately, also in complete forgetfulness of all religion, having lived an unbeliever up to the age of 64. "The recollection of the angelical virtues of a beloved mother," he writes, "led me to look back and repent of the wanderings of a long and sinful life. To no purpose, O Lord! did You scourge me with afflictions, and embitter all my fleeting pleasures and vain pursuits by many trials and disappointments. Alas! I trampled upon and despised those multiplied graces, intended to bring me back to You, and only became, by occasion of them, the more hardened and obdurate. From the depth of my iniquity, after fifty years of sin, I sent up to You a suppliant cry, and, all hideous and sullied that I was, You deigned to listen to my supplication, and strengthened my desponding and broken heart. I had nothing, My God, to offer to You but the dregs of a life stained by crime; but in Your

merciful goodness, You accepted my tears of repentance, and gave calm, and peace, and hope to this heart, so weighed down by remorse and overwhelmed by the fear of Your judgments. O tender Father!—since You permit me to address You by that name—my tongue can never sufficiently express the praise and thanks due to You for such great favors, nor the extent of gratitude which, I hope, will continue to animate me every remaining moment of my life. Yes, to my latest breath I will magnify Your merciful forbearance towards me, an obstinate and miserable sinner."

EIGHTH DAY.

The Lost Groat.

You, My son, are the prodigal son, the strayed sheep, the lost groat. You see portrayed in these parables My goodness, mercy, and love. But are you conscious of the charms that my mercifulness and love have for hearts that are truly contrite and humble? See this woman, how anxious and unhappy she is. She gets a light, and sweeps the house. What precious thing is it that she has lost? Only a groat! And when, after a diligent search, she has found it, how happy she is! She cannot contain her joy, but must have her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her. When you, My child, were torn from My Heart by sin, and lost to heaven and My love,

I sought you in a thousand different ways suggested by My loving, watchful, and generous Heart. Through the darkness in which Satan would fain conceal your danger from you, I have made My light to shine on your conscience, and shown you the dread abyss that lay yawning at your feet. And yet why have I thus had care of you? Have I any want of you? In losing you, what should I lose; and in gaining you, what should I gain? Still, despite your unworthiness, when you were restored to Me, how great has been My joy in pressing you to My Heart! Yes, My Heart has been moved to its very depths, and I have called upon My angels and saints to rejoice with Me, because I had found that which had been lost. In return for so many favors, I ask only your heart; yet, My child, you will hardly give Me as much of it as will save you from hell. Pride, vanity, self-love, inordinate attachment to creatures, still chiefly occupy it. Will it be for ever thus, My child?

REFLECTION.—What reply can I make to these pathetic reproaches of my Divine Master? How great has been His loving patience with me! When I deserted Him, He did not abandon me; when I despised His love, He still continued to love me; when I closed my eyes to His grace, He did not allow me to perish in my voluntary blindness. "O God!" I ought to exclaim with St. Teresa, "You know how I love You." But when shall I make

some fitting return for such noble and unselfish charity? When shall I root out from my soul all that can give pain to the Heart of my Divine Master. When shall He behold it adorned with all the virtues He would desire?

PRACTICE.—1. When hesitating about making some sacrifice for God, excite yourself to fervor by the thought, Can I refuse such a trifle to the Heart of Jesus? 2. Omit no opportunity of fighting against your habitual failings, in order that you may thus, from day to day, render your heart less unworthy of that of your Divine Master.

EXAMPLE.

The Baron Géramb: His generous Devotion to the Service of God.

Even during his life at court the Baron Géramb had many signal instances of the special care with which God watched over him and directed events to his eternal interests. In the year 1814, after his release from a prolonged captivity, he resolved to consecrate the remainder of his life wholly to God's service. His first thought was to repair to the Holy Land, considering that he should feel more assurance of the forgiveness of his sins amidst the scenes hallowed by the presence of our Redeemer. He had made all his preparations for his departure, and was on the point of starting, when he first heard of the establishment of

the convent of La Trappe, at Laval. This intelligence caused him to change his mind, and decided him on becoming a member of that community, remarkable for its rigid discipline and great austerity. After a novitiate of fifteen months, the Baron Géramb, heretofore chamberlain to the Emperor of Austria, gladly resigned his high-sounding title for that of servant of God, exchanged his numerous decorations for a simple wooden cross, and his rich uniforms for a coarse brown habit. The bed on which he reposed after the fatigues of the day was nothing more than a bare plank, with a second piece of wood for a pillow, and his food consisted of vegetables cooked in salt and water. The most painful sacrifice he found was that of giving up his own will; but even in this he perfectly succeeded, though not without many hard struggles. When the church of the convent was to be built, the duty was assigned him to beg alms from house to house for that object. Nothing discouraged him or caused him to lose patience; neither the fatigue nor the severity of the weather, nor the humiliating refusals he met with. The thought that he was laboring to prepare a dwelling for his Divine Lord rendered all his hardships easy and agreeable. Often might he be seen in the depth of a rigorous winter, in hail and snow, with bare head, but countenance ever cheerful, holding out a well-nigh frozen hand for the alms that was often rudely refused him.

NINTH DAY.

The Lost Sheep.

Behold the lost sheep straying away from the fold; soon shall it perish from hunger, or become the prey of some ravening beast. But it belongs to a good Pastor, to one who knows its misfortune and wretched state, and is even now hastening "to seek and to save that which has been lost." After long and anxious search, He at length finds it, and, placing it on His shoulders, carries it back rejoicing to the fold. Are you not, My child, this poor unhappy wanderer? Alas! too long have you been separated from your Divine Pastor and His benign protection; too long have you been straying away from that fold where He watches over His flock with such tender, unremitting care. When away from Him, have you not pined and grown weary, even whilst indulging the passions which were leading you on to eternal destruction? Have you found anything in the ways of sin that could really satisfy the desires of your soul? Was there aught but disappointment in those pursuits, on account of which you forfeited all claim to the joys of heaven? Often have you been on the point of being for ever lost; many a time has the devil, thirsting for your destruction, been ready to seize and claim you for his prey. Even when you fled Me, I pursued, and called to you with the voice of a tender father who mourned for

his erring child. Though you considered My calls importunate, still I did not abandon you. When at last you had reached the very brink of the precipice, and another step would have plunged you for ever into the abyss, happily you hearkened to My voice of entreaty, and threw yourself into the arms of My mercy. I pressed you rejoicing to My loving Heart, and imparted to you such sweet consolation as at once softened the poignancy of your sorrow, and gave you courage to undertake the work of repentance. Restored to the society of My faithful children, you have tasted a joy beyond that of the shipwrecked mariner on finding himself restored to his family, after being rescued from the angry billows at the last moment, when all chance of safety seemed over. After such and so many favors, can you doubt of the love of the Divine Pastor of your soul?

REFLECTION.—To fail in confidence to my Divine Saviour is to wound His Adorable Heart most acutely. Lost sheep that I have been, obstinately straying in the desert of that world, for which the Son of God on the eve of His passion would not pray; brought back, as it were, in spite of myself, to His sacred fold, through the efforts of His surpassing love; how comes it that I have not recourse with unbounded confidence to this Pastor, so full of goodness and love in every trial, difficulty, and temptation? When bent on my own ruin, the Heart of Jesus yearned for me, sought me out,

and restored me to His love. He who has already done so much for me assuredly will not now refuse me those graces which He inspires me to ask of Him.

PRACTICE.—1. Let the recollection of the great mercy which Jesus has shown you in your sinfulness encourage you to make known to Him your wants in fervent prayer, and inspire you with that faith by which the just man lives. 2. Let this same remembrance inflame your zeal in behalf of sinners, especially those for whom charity the more obliges you to pray. Pray fervently to the Heart of Jesus; He only awaits your petition to grant you an abundance of His graces.

EXAMPLE.

Conversion of La Harpe, related by Himself.

"I was in prison, alone, and very sad. For some days previous I had been reading the Psalms, the Gospels, and some other books of devotion. Through their means the light of faith was rekindled in my soul; I saw everything in a new light that terrified me and filled me with consternation, for it revealed but too clearly the wanderings of forty years. I beheld all the sin and evil of this lost time, but no remedy, and nothing around me spoke of the helps of religion. I was in daily expectation of death. No priest was permitted on the scaffold to console the dying; he only ascended it to die himself. Full of distressing thoughts,

I was utterly cast down and disheartened. I said to God, What am I to do, what is to become of me? The Imitation of Christ lay upon the table. I had heard that in that excellent book an answer was to be found in every difficulty. I opened it, and my eyes at once fell upon these words: 'My son, behold Me; I come to your aid because you have invoked Me.' I read no more; the sudden effect which these words produced in me was beyond expression. I cannot describe the sensation, though I never can forget it. I lay on the ground, bathed in tears, feeling my heart touched and comforted, yet ready to break. The words of the Imitation rang in my ears, and filled my soul with emotion and gratitude. O Father! I can never forget all I owe to you, and I implore that you will ask of God to give me time to do penance. I know that I shall have no difficulty in fulfilling what may be required of me, if only strengthened by your prayers."—*From the Life of M. l'Abbé Brydane, by the Abbé Carron.*

TENTH DAY.

The Prodigal Son.

"I SAY to you that there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance" (Luke xv. 7). These, My son, are My words, and My mercy towards those who truly

repent is such as to almost excite the jealousy of the just. Consider attentively the conduct of this ungrateful, unnatural son, who does not hesitate to inflict the deepest of wounds on a father's heart by deserting him. He withdraws himself from the vigilant eye of his parent, goes into a distant country, and squanders his portion in shameful excesses. Then, being reduced to the most abject poverty and want, he hires himself to a master, who employs him in feeding swine, and he craves, in vain, the disgusting food on which these animals are fed. What a sad spectacle, My son, and how full of instruction for you! You also have abandoned your Father who is in heaven. What treasures have you not sacrificed to your passions—My friendship, My Blood, eternal life! Oh! to what a depth have you fallen! Created according to My image and likeness, you have basely disfigured this likeness. In giving yourself up to sin, you knew full well that you were deserting My service and engaging in that of the devil. In doing this you were fully aware that you were trampling on My rights over you as your Creator and your Saviour, and that, had you been struck by death whilst in that state, you should have been for ever lost. What an unworthy choice! What crying ingratitude! Even still you suffer yourself to be governed by pride, and are full of self-esteem. You seek to be praised and honored, and made much of! O my child! renounce for ever these

foolish pretensions. Be mindful of your former crimes, of the unhappy past, and be content to occupy even the humblest place in the household of your Heavenly Father.

REFLECTION.—By committing sin I have degraded myself, and merited opprobrium and contempt in this life and eternal torments in the next. I should regard myself as having incurred an everlasting disgrace. If I kept this undoubted truth in mind, I would be humble both in thought and act, and would consider any slight or humiliation I might meet with as only much less than I have deserved, and bear it, therefore, in a spirit of penance, hoping by that means to acquit myself of a part of that great debt which I am under to God's offended Majesty. However I may try to flatter myself, my conscience tells me I am a pardoned criminal and nothing more.

PRACTICE.—1. Look back each day with sorrow on your past sins; and though you may have the consoling assurance that they have been remitted through the sacrament of penance, yet do not cease to practise acts of expiation. 2. When tempted by pride, repel the temptation by calling to mind that you have by your sins deserved to suffer every humiliation, and even the eternal torments of hell.

EXAMPLE.

Humility of Père Géramb. His Idea of true Happiness.

"I must reveal to you, my dear friend," he writes when about to embark for Magadino, "the thoughts that passed through my mind, and you will perceive from them the dominion which pride still exercises over me, though now a Trappist for several years. The vessel is divided into two compartments: one portion is covered, and has arrangements for the sick, with a cabin underneath; the other is without covering, and the cabin attached to it very low, small, and inconvenient. This latter portion is designed for the poor and those who wish to travel economically. Well, would you believe it? Nothing could exceed my embarrassment when asked, in the hearing of others, which compartment I wished to travel in. Then there arose a fierce struggle between the Baron Géramb and Father Mary Joseph. The Baron wished to prove to Father Mary Joseph that it was absolutely necessary he should occupy the best place, and had a thousand cogent reasons in support of this opinion: first, it was more respectable; then the danger of sunstroke from exposure, the treatment for which would cost a great deal more than the difference in the fare, and therefore to be provided against by one under vow of poverty, etc., etc. Father Mary Joseph, on his part, maintained that having en-

gaged by this same vow to practise humility, it was fortunate for him to have this opportunity of doing so, and of making atonement for his former shortcomings in this particular. By the grace of God, Father Mary Joseph gained the day!

"How beautiful is the Lago Maggiore, and how vividly did it awake in my soul recollections of other times! I had crossed it eighteen years before; a career of pleasure and enjoyment was then present to my imagination. Surrounded by all that could render life happy, the bright future seemed to give promise of everything the heart could desire. Now, seated alone in a corner of the boat, I recalled the memory of those days, and asked myself if I had ever been as happy as now, under the altered circumstances of a religious and a penitent. No, in that olden time I knew not what true happiness was; a fleeting moment of intoxicating pleasure and folly does not confer it. I have found happiness in my dungeon at Vincennes, and in the sackcloth and ashes of La Trappe, because in those places I found my God. To satisfy my craving hunger, the world threw me only crumbs; to slake my thirst, it offered me a poisoned draught that but consumed me. But in captivity, in retreat, God has visited His miserable servant, and displayed towards him an infinite love—a love that justly claims in return all the powers of my soul, and fills it with what is indeed true happiness.

'Thou hast, O my God! created us for Thyself, and our hearts can only find happiness and peace in thee.'"—*Père Géramb's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem.*

ELEVENTH DAY.

The Prodigal Son, Continued.

The prodigal has met with a reverse that overwhelms him, but which will be his salvation. Under the weight of his misfortune he groans, and bitterly regrets the comforts of his father's house, where he now would be only too happy to dwell as a menial. Then he comes to the resolution to return and throw himself at his father's feet, and make an avowal of his baseness and unworthiness; and, having done this, then will he ask for pardon, and beg to be admitted as a servant. Without further hesitation, he arises, sets out, and now he approaches his old and happy home. His sorrowing father, seeing him return, hastens out to meet him; he utters no reproach, no word of harshness or reproof escapes him, but, without awaiting even the poor penitent's humble avowal of his fault, he embraces him with tender love, sheds over him tears, but they are tears of joy, and commands his servants to clothe him quickly with the robe of honor, to put a ring upon his finger, the pledge of reconciliation, and to prepare a feast to celebrate his happy return.

After having too long yielded to a deplorable infatuation, you too, My child, touched by My grace, have come to feel the desolation, misery, and abjection of your soul. You sighed to have back again those days of happy innocence which you passed in My service, and longed to return to your Father's house. From the first homeward step you took, I had determined on receiving you with tenderness. Confessing your errors to My minister, you have been addressed by him who holds My place in words of compassionate charity and encouragement. You have had pronounced over you the sentence of forgiveness, and have received the assurance and pledge that your former ingratitude has been forgotten. I have called upon Heaven to rejoice for your return, and My minister at the altar has prepared for you a divine Banquet, in which I Myself am become your food. I have given Myself to you without reserve, and have, with the plenitude of My benedictions, entered into your heart—that heart from which you had before banished Me, to make place for My enemy. Ah! My child, be mindful of these mercies, be nevermore ungrateful, be Mine generously for the future, and I will ever be your sweet, your loving Jesus.

REFLECTION.—The mercy of the Heart of Jesus is infinite; no one should know this better than I, who have experienced it to the full. Am I, then, to be for ever returning nothing but ingratitude for such inexhaustible mercy? No,

I will not again relapse. And should my lamentable weakness, the sad inheritance of a sinful parent, again betray me, I will at least avoid all wilful sin by shunning temptation. This is the least I can offer in return for so many graces poured down on me by the best of Fathers.

PRACTICE.—1. Accustom yourself to renew in a general manner the accusation of your past sins when about to receive absolution, particularly those by which you have most seriously offended God, and redouble your sorrow for having committed them. 2. Let the remembrance of your past sins excite in you a sincere desire to correct your ordinary failings. Oh! why do you take so little pains to avoid offending God—you who have often, perhaps, deserved at His hands the punishment of hell?

EXAMPLE.

Happiness of a penitent Soldier.

An old cavalry officer, being on a journey, happened to pass through a place where Père Brydane was engaged in giving a mission. Curious to hear and see so celebrated a man, he entered the church just as the father was explaining the advantages of a good general confession. Touched by grace, the soldier at once determined on his conversion, and lost no time in making known his resolution to Father Brydane. He made his confession with sen-

timents of the most sincere sorrow, and afterwards declared that he felt as if an insupportable load had been removed from his heart. He arose from the feet of the holy confessor, shedding tears before all the people assembled. Nothing, he said, was so sweet to him as those tears which flowed unbidden through love and gratitude. He followed the missioner into the sacristy, and there, in the presence of a number of people, this truly sincere and humble penitent thus expressed himself: "Never in my long life have I experienced a happiness so pure and real as that which I now enjoy in the assurance of being once more in friendship with my God. The king whom I have served these thirty-six years, surrounded though he is by the pomp and splendor of a throne, was never as happy as I am now that I have got rid of the horrible burden of my sins. I would not exchange my present happiness for all the grandeur and riches of an earthly sovereignty." Then, throwing himself again on his knees, and seizing the father's hand, he exclaimed, "Ought I not to give fervent thanks to the good God for having brought me, as if by the hand, into this holy place? Oh! pray, I beg of you, to the Lord, that He may give me time to do penance. I feel confident that I shall persevere if only sustained by your prayers."—*From Life of Père Brydane, by the Abbé Carron.*

TWELFTH DAY.

The Samaritan Woman.

You have seen My merciful anxiety for the conversion of sinners; I have now to show you with what tender condescension it pleases My Heart to open their eyes to their misery and attract them to My love. Attend. When returning to Galilee, and passing through Samaria, I came to Jacob's Well. Being weary, I sat near the well, whilst My disciples went into Sichar to purchase food. Then came a Samaritan woman to draw water. Thirsting for her enlightenment and conversion, I said: "Give Me to drink." Then that Samaritan woman saith: "How dost Thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman? For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans." I answered and said to her: "If thou didst know the gift of God, and who He is Who saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." How often, My child, have I arranged opportunities for benefiting your soul, delivering it from sin, and furnishing it with the means of expiating sins committed, and acquiring the virtues which should render it pleasing in My sight! How many times have I endeavored to make you conscious of the stains by which your soul was disfigured, the worldly entanglements that bound it to the earth and hindered its heavenly

course! How often have I not said to your heart, "If thou didst but know the gift of God!" Oh! if you did but recollect Who it was that asked of you that effort, that sacrifice; Who it was that sued for your love, you would yourself have been the first to offer what I desired of you, and would have hastened to rid yourself of all that could render you displeasing to Me. Yes, you would have besought Me, and I would have given you without measure the "living water" of My grace; the time which you have unfortunately lost in resisting My love would have been employed with immense advantage in treasuring up My gifts, and causing them to fructify in your heart, to your happiness in this life and in eternity. Realize, My child, and bring home to yourself these truths, and then I will reveal others no less salutary to you in the sequel of My conversation with the Samaritan woman.

REFLECTION.—Alas! how can I sufficiently deplore my long and ungrateful resistance to the Divine inspirations of the Heart of Jesus! Of what treasures have I not deprived myself, what graces have I not wilfully rejected, what expiation might I not have made! Even still have I not cause to reproach myself with slighting the "gift of God"? Oh! if I would only behold these things in the light of faith, and would consider Who it is that deigns to listen to me when I pray, that speaks to me by His Grace, that immolates Himself for me on the

altar, that lovingly awaits my visits in the tabernacle—Who it is, in fine, that I have the inexpressible honor of receiving in the Holy Communion, with what respect and pious recollection would I not be filled, and with what pure, tender, and abiding love would I not be penetrated!

PRACTICE.—1. In your practices of piety animate yourself to fervor by the thought of the infinite greatness of God and his wonderful goodness to you. 2. Prize the smallest grace you receive from Him; if well employed, it may acquire for you "an eternal weight of glory" hereafter (2 Cor. iv.)

EXAMPLE.

Great Piety of Brother Columban.

Brother Columban, a member of a Trappist community near Florence, who died in the year 1714, used to constantly deplore his inability to love God as much as He deserved. He desired to love Him infinitely, as the supremely perfect Being, whose majesty, mercy, and goodness are without measure or limit. But he strove at the same time that his love of God should be accompanied by a profound veneration, so as to keep his soul equally occupied with the consideration of the justice and the mercy of God. By this means he united in an admirable manner sentiments of love and fear, of respect and confidence, and of conformity to

the Divine will. When he entered a church in which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved, he called to mind the majesty of Him whom he approached, and said within himself, "*Deus, quis similis Tibi?*"—'Who is like to Thee, O my God?' Thus he commenced with reverential fear; but, charity presently inflaming his heart, he broke out into acts of fervent love. It was impossible to see him pray and not be struck by his modesty and perfect recollection. In choir he was never seen to show any evidence of fatigue; on the contrary, he found such consolation in those holy exercises that often, when the Divine Office was ended, he remained so wrapt, as it were, in God, that the Community would pass by him unnoticed, and the Superior would have to direct him to take his place and follow the brothers. The constant remembrance that God witnessed all his actions inspired him with such a continual care over his conduct and spirit of interior recollection, that he performed the most trivial and ordinary actions with a holy fervor and supernatural purity of intention.—*Narrative of the Lives and Deaths of the Trappists.*

THIRTEENTH DAY.

Conversation of our Lord with the Samaritan Woman, continued.

"Sir, Thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep; from whence, then, hast

Thou living water? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well, and drank thereof himself and his children and his cattle?" Thus it was she replied to the inestimable offer I made her. I took no heed of her words of incredulity, but explained the difference between the water of Jacob's well and "the water springing up to life everlasting," of which I am the source. To lead her on to faith and repentance, I said, "Go, call your husband, and come hither." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." I then showed her that I knew the secrets of her private life, at which, confounded and astonished, she answered, "Sir, I perceive Thou art a Prophet. . . . I know that the Messiah cometh; therefore, when He is come, He will tell us all things." I replied, "I am He, who am speaking to thee." . . . The woman, therefore, left her water-pot and went her way into the city, and saith to the men there, "Come and see a man who hath told me all things whatsoever I have done. Is not He the Christ?" They went, therefore, out of the city and came to Me. . . . Now, of that city, many of the Samaritans believed, for the word of the woman giving testimony. . . . And many more believed because of *My* own word. . . . And they said to the woman, "We now believe, not for thy saying; for we have heard Him and know that this indeed is the Saviour of the world" (John iv.) You, My child, have

known this Saviour from your infancy; "the living water" of which I spoke to her, you have had to quench your thirst from the very commencement of your existence. How have you corresponded to the past grace granted you of knowing from your youth the Redeemer who was for so many ages "the Desired of nations"? How have you valued the consolations of the true faith? What advantages have you drawn from the inexhaustible fountain of graces which I have bequeathed to My Church, and which she dispenses unstintingly in My name to those who come to receive them? And if you have been so happy as to have been truly impressed with the sanctity of My doctrine and the dignity and efficacy of My sacramental graces, have you, like the Samaritan woman, ever endeavored to make known those mercies to others? Have you by your zeal brought to the foot of My altar any of those whom you might have influenced by your advice? Can any say of you, like the inhabitants of Sichar, we now believe, not because of your saying, though that was what first inclined us to virtue, but because we ourselves have already felt and tasted how sweet the Lord is?

REFLECTION.—I have been taught from my earliest years to believe in my Divine Saviour; but too long have I lived as if this sacred knowledge imposed on me no obligation. My faith has been all but dead and unprofitable, but shall be so no longer. For the future, instead

of seeking after "the troubled waters" which only irritate and increase the thirst of my soul, I will drink of the living stream that flows from the adorable Heart of Jesus. Not content with myself enjoying the delights of these refreshing waters, I will also apply myself to bring others to share the like happiness, especially any who by my example or advice have been heretofore led astray. Henceforth, united in devotion to Jesus, we will say to Him, O Beloved Saviour, we are Thine now and for ever; our wanderings are ended; never more shall we separate ourselves from Thee.

PRACTICE.—1. Look upon the gift of faith as your greatest treasure, evince your gratitude to God for having bestowed it on you, and try to make Him better known and loved by others. 2. When grace speaks forcibly to your heart and claims from you some sacrifice, say to yourself, It is Jesus who speaks; can I refuse Him what He asks, after having shown towards me such love and mercy? This thought will give you strength to conquer your repugnance, and to make whatever sacrifice may be required of you.

EXAMPLE.

Heroic Sacrifice of St. Jane Frances de Chantal.

With admirable generosity, Madame de Chantal hearkened to the voice of grace calling her to quit the world, in order to give herself entirely to her Divine Spouse. The day on which

she was to leave the kindest of fathers and tear herself away from her most tenderly loved child, found her several hours prostrate before the altar, begging of God courage to love Him above all to the end. She then sought her father, and found her little son with him, bathed in tears and sobbing as if his mother were on her death-bed. He threw his arms round the neck of his mother, who felt as if her heart must break. "I am going to be left an orphan," he cried; "a mother whom I love has the cruelty to abandon me." As he said these words, he embraced her with the most touching tenderness. Madame de Chantal felt the necessity of ending this cruel scene. She hastened to her father, and threw herself on her knees before him. The old man could not speak; his voice trembled with emotion, he wept bitterly, and nothing was audible but his sighs. Raising his eyes to heaven, he placed his hands on his daughter's head, and kissed her. She bade him adieu, and having pressed her lips to his forehead, was turning to leave the room, when her child threw himself across the doorway. "You shall not leave me," he cried, "unless you choose to walk upon me." At this sight, all her mother's feelings were aroused, and burying her head in her hands, she shed a torrent of tears. God came to her aid. He represented to her mind the convent where she should lead so many faithful spouses to Jesus, and showed her those holy women blessing her

for having given them a home and refuge from the snares and temptations of the world. "This is the moment," she said within herself, "to prove to God that I love Him. I will drain the cup to the dregs; never was a more terrible one presented to a mother's lips. But the justice of the Lord is great; for this proof of His love He will pardon me my sins, and hear me when I invoke His protection for the child I entrust to Him." She gazed upon her child as he lay groaning at her feet, and gave him a last tender embrace; then, as if she heard Jesus Christ calling, she hurried away without looking behind, and from that moment forth God recompensed her for this complete oblation of herself to Him, by bestowing on her a constant infusion of His choicest graces.—*Life of St. Jane Frances de Chantal.*

FOURTEENTH DAY.

The ineffable Tenderness of the Heart of Jesus towards those who love Him.

In the preceding reflections on the parables and the history of the Samaritan woman, I have shown what My Heart feels and loves to do for those who have strayed away from Me by sin. Hearken again, My child, to this same Heart, languishing so with love for those who love It that a new language, as it were, is necessary in order to give expression to Its Divine tenderness.

It was the eve of My death. I had just eaten with My disciples that last Pasch, which with desire I had desired to eat with them before I suffered. I wished to inscribe My last will on the hearts of My followers in words of ardent love—words fittingly recorded by the beloved disciple who reposed on My bosom before I uttered My last and loving farewell. Every word of this last testament, My child, is a source of truth and inexhaustible love. "Little children, yet a little time, and I am with you." As if I said, O you whom I have loved as a mother loves her offspring, behold we are now to separate; hear, therefore, My last wishes. "A new commandment I give unto you—that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you love one another." But, though I say we are to part, "let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many mansions. If not, I would have told you, that I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to Myself, that where I am you also may be." Meanwhile, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you," not a deceitful, miscalled peace, which allows the soul to sleep on the brink of the precipice, but that true "peace of God which surpasseth all understanding." "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I

said to you: I go away, and I come to you." Is not this, My child, the language of a Heart sorrowful at parting, but which yet tries to console and encourage the objects of its tender love? Occupy yourself to-day with these words, uttered before I ascended the hill on which I was to be sacrificed for your salvation; lean your heart on Mine, and the refreshing unction of My grace, "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb," will quickly inundate your soul.

REFLECTION.—My Jesus, on the eve of His death, asks of me that I would love others as He has loved me. In sight of the horrible sufferings He was about to undergo, it seems to afford Him sweet consolation to establish amongst men the law of tender, universal charity, which would make brothers of all, if all obeyed the Gospel. Have I been faithful to this last command of my Saviour? Have I possessed myself of this inheritance of love He has bequeathed to me, and without which I may hope in vain to be one day where He is, or, even in this world, to enjoy His peace, that precious pledge and foretaste of the eternal peace hereafter? Can my conscience testify that I love all mankind as the children of our Heavenly Father, and co-heirs of Him who has loved us and immolated Himself for us? Am I ready on every occasion to evince the same charity towards my neighbor as if I recognized Jesus Christ Himself in each?

PRACTICE.—1. Let not your charity be regu-

lated by natural affection, claims of relationship, or self-interest, but seek to love and succor each on every occasion for God and in God. 2. When you feel a repugnance towards another or unwillingness to serve him, remember that he and you are children of the same Father who is in heaven, and that he has been redeemed by the same Precious Blood, and is destined for the same eternal happiness.

EXAMPLE.

Edifying Death of the Count de Stolberg.

The Count de Stolberg, descended from a royal race, and distinguished for his fine character and eminent attainments, had the misfortune of being educated in the errors of Protestantism. Perusal of the works of the Holy Fathers led him to doubt about the truth of Lutheranism, from which he proceeded to seek the truth with all the candor and sincerity of an upright and earnest mind. Having discovered it in the Catholic Church, he at once threw up his high offices, and tearing himself away from friends, relatives, and a beloved father, with all the agony of a warm, affectionate heart, he and his wife retired to Münster, and there abjured Protestantism in the year 1800. His conversion drew upon him the fiercest persecution, but this only served to show the more forcibly the immense fund of charity with which his truly Christian heart

was filled. In a letter, written shortly after his reception into the Church, he says, "It is but just that my great happiness should be mingled with trials, and such is actually the case. Every one seems to shun us, and our position is painful indeed. May He who has suffered Himself to be crowned with thorns give me the grace to gather, with those He now sends me, immortal, roses." His desire was accomplished; the irritation against him was very great, but his patience, mildness, and kindness towards his persecutors were greater still, so that after a time many of them learned to do him justice.

The death of this great man was most edifying. "Towards one o'clock," writes one of his children, of whom fifteen surrounded his bed, "he had us all assembled. As we knelt around him, he addressed to us the following words, in weak but solemn and impressive voice: 'In the presence of that God who is everywhere, I beg of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to have mercy on us all; on me, my wife, my children and their families, and on all our relatives, both living and dead. May He bind us together in the bonds of Faith, Hope, and Charity, so that not one of our little flock be lost, but that all may be happily reunited before the throne of God. Miserable sinner that I am, I still go before Jesus Christ full of confidence in His mercy. I beg pardon of my dear children, and those with whom I

have lived, for any want of charity that I have been guilty of towards them, and for any scandal I have given. May God remove it from their souls. I beg of you all to pray for me as long as you live. May the Spirit of God fill us with His love, so that we may be one, even as the Father and the Son are one. If any of you think he has suffered injury, let him not bear enmity, but let him, on the contrary, pray for the welfare of those who have shown hostility towards him. My dear children, there is one thing above all others I wish to impress on your hearts before I go. We are all sinners; but ever have the fullest confidence, and open your heart to your Saviour. Do not fear to approach Him, for, if you do not trust in Him Who has offered His life for your salvation, in whom, then, can you confide?' "—*Annals of Christian Philosophy.*

FIFTEENTH DAY.

Our Lord encouraging the Faithful in Trials and Temptations.

Having admonished My disciples to abide in Me, as the branch of itself cannot bring forth fruit, I continued, "But if you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you." I then repeated the precept so dear to Me: "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater

love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do the things that I have commanded you. . . . These things I command you, that you love one another." Judge what must be My tender love for man when I thus thrice repeat in such impressive terms My testament of charity! "If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated Me before you." And as I spoke to them of our approaching separation, and they became more dejected, I hastened to console them: "Because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth; it is expedient to you that I go. . . . You now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your joy no man shall take from you. In these terms, My child, I foretold to My followers the way, strewn with thorns, by which they should walk in order to follow in My footsteps, and attain to the unending joys of Paradise; so that when the trial should have come, they might remember what I said, and be encouraged to bear it with Christian patience, in view of the joyful reward which it shall be in the power of no one to take from them. Is your soul oppressed with sorrows and trials? Even so, be consoled. Your Divine Master has drunk of the chalice before you, and made it less bitter. How unhappy was your state, since, to deliver you from it, nothing would suffice but the sufferings of a God! Esteem

your earthly trials as things most precious, since they are a pledge of the assured reward promised by your Saviour to those who are sharers in His sufferings and his cross.

REFLECTION.—"The life of man on earth is a warfare," and mine is no exception to the rule. What efforts have I not continually to make to uproot my passions, to conquer wicked desires, to tear from my heart so much that would indeed be grateful to nature, but offensive to God! What effort does it not cost me to overcome resentment, and remain faithful to the great precept of charity, so solemnly enjoined in the last will of my Jesus, Who afterwards prayed even for His executioners! What a struggle does it not take to deny myself certain amusements, to practise humility, to bear slander patiently! Oh! yes, it needs violence to subject human nature to these restraints; but if I die to self, I shall live to God, and shall secure the endless joys of heaven. Can any sacrifice, any self-denial be considered hard when it secures me the happiness of the saints?

PRACTICE.—1. In all the sacrifices and painful efforts necessary for your soul's welfare, think of all that the Sacred Heart of Jesus has undergone for you, and with what loving tenderness. 2. Fly the deceitful pleasures of the world, and sigh constantly after the solid joys of eternity.

EXAMPLE.

Ardent Desires of a Soul for its God.

Immediately previous to his death in the Seminary of St. Sulpice, in the year 1827, the holy Calistus Frèze languished for many months on a bed of pain. The one thought seemed to be ever present to his mind during his last illness, as indeed had been also the case during his entire life—the love of God. His countenance wore at all times an expression of perfect content, as if he already enjoyed a foretaste of the eternal happiness in store for him. If at any time he spoke more than was needful, it was to express his longing desire to receive the Blessed Eucharist, or to speak of the joy he felt in being united to his God. On these occasions, he became quite animated, and depicted his feelings in such glowing language as greatly to move the hearts of his hearers. Even when his voice failed him, his looks, turned lovingly towards the place where his Lord dwelt, showed clearly with what sweet, grateful thoughts his soul was filled. During the days immediately preceding his death he spoke but little, and seemed desirous of concealing from men that which was passing between his soul and God. No doubt his heart was occupied with sentiments akin to those which he had shortly before expressed in writing, and which so well describe the aspirations of a soul inflamed with the love of God, con-

templating the day of its deliverance. "O my God," he wrote, "already I plunge into the ocean of Thy love. O torrent of delights! the more I taste Thee, the more I long to be immersed. I feel as if already separated from earth and creatures. I am like a skiff far away from the land, and borne on by an irresistible wind. Courage! my soul, eternity is in view. Courage! we are nearly in port; let us hasten into the haven of God's eternal kingdom. O my God, come and take possession of my soul with all its powers; divested of all earthly ties, be Thou its joy, its only thought, for all eternity."

SIXTEENTH DAY.

The Prayer of Jesus for His Followers on the eve of His Passion.

"In the world you shall have distress; but have confidence. I have overcome the world." Thus ended My last discourse with My disciples. Treasure up, My child, these words in your heart. I will Myself aid you to fathom their important meaning. "Father, the hour has come," the hour of My final and bloody sacrifice; "glorify Thy Son," by His resurrection, that "Thy Son may glorify Thee" in the establishment of His Church, whither will be gathered together, from all nations, Thy friends and elect. "I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given Me out of the world"—that name of Father, by which the

children of Adam had never before been taught to address their Creator. "I pray for them. . . . Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as We also are;" that, being strangers to the spirit of disunion, jealousy, hatred, and distrust, they, like Us, may have but the one will. "While I was with them, I kept them in Thy Name; and now I come to Thee. . . . I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil"—that evil of which the world is full. "And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me, that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us." Witness here, My child, My earnest solicitude that all Christians should have their hearts filled with charity towards each other through love of Me, so that being united in God as their centre, they might contribute to each other's happiness by mutual sympathy and assistance. "Father, I will that where I am they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me." It is your Divine Mediator, your Saviour, Who thus prays for you, My child, and expresses His desire that you should be with Him in heaven "to see His glory," and be partaker of His eternal bliss.

REFLECTION.—God encourages me to address Him by the title of Father. How good He is, He so great, so infinitely elevated beyond the

most perfect of creatures, to condescend, notwithstanding my miserable unworthiness, to call Himself my Father! What gratitude do I not owe to my loving Jesus, Who, in becoming my brother (Matt. xii. 50), has obtained for me the glorious privilege of adoption amongst the children of God! But, so far from making Him a fitting return, does not my conduct, alas! bring dishonor on this beautiful title of child of God? Do I not frustrate and render of no avail to me the prayer of my Saviour on the eve of His Passion? In that sublime prayer, Jesus wills that all those whom the Father had given Him should lead lives worthy of children of God, in order that they may one day be clothed with His glory, and that His joy may be also theirs; whilst I allow my heart to be filled with the love of earthly things, with love of self and those things that flatter my pride. Oh! if I only willed my own happiness as Jesus wills it, what purity would there be in my thoughts and affections, and in my every word and work!

PRACTICE.—1. Ever pronounce with feelings of deep gratitude, love, and unbounded filial confidence those first words of the prayer which Jesus Himself has taught us, "Our Father Who art in heaven." 2. Jesus has commanded you to "pray without ceasing." Unite yourself with Him praying for you on the eve of His Passion, so that the aspirations of your heart may ascend, pure and pleasing, before the throne of grace.

Fidelity of M. Olier in the practice of Constant Prayer.

M. Olier, founder of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, had recourse to prayer for guidance and help in every difficulty in which he found himself placed. Did he want the means of helping the poor? he prayed for them, assured that his prayers would not be in vain. It seemed as if our Lord sometimes purposely permitted him to be encompassed with difficulties, in order to give him opportunities for the exercise of his spirit of great reliance on Divine Providence. No matter what trial he met with, prayer was always his first resource. Whenever anything was referred to him for advice, he recommended it to God before coming to a decision, asking light to know the Adorable Will, and giving no answer until he ascertained the answer that God would have him give. He used to pass a considerable time before the Blessed Sacrament with this object; but if the business did not admit of delay, he contented himself with raising his mind to Jesus to implore His aid. "It often happened," writes a friend of M. Olier, "that when asked for advice, he deferred giving his opinion till the next day; in the interval he would recommend the case to God in fervent prayer. I have frequently had occasion to remark the wonderful blessings which this practice obtained from Heaven." Our Lord was pleased to reward even in this life this

fidelity to prayer. He became so absorbed in the charity of God that he was often found prostrate in an ecstasy, and appeared already to partake of the pure delights of the saints.—*Life of M. Olier.*

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Jesus' Immolation of Himself for us in the Garden of Olives.

You have listened, My child, to My words expressive of all that loving tenderness can say to the object of its love; contemplate now the acts by which this same love for you has been manifested. My love for you has been most generous and heroical, devoting to you My mortal life, and displaying itself in ways the most touching and capable of moving your heart. Accompany Me now, My child, through the stages of My Passion, from the garden of Gethsemani to the hill of Calvary.

Prostrate on the ground in the garden of sorrows, My mind took in all the approaching indignities and sufferings which were only to be terminated by the cruel death of the cross. I saw before Me this death, with all the horrible circumstances with which the cruelty and deadly malice of My enemies would accompany it. I foresaw it all, and might, if I chose, have easily avoided it; but you, My child, needed this sacrifice, and, loving you, I made it. I waited, bathed in a bloody sweat, caused by

the sight of the deformity of your sins. I waited, and they came to seize Me; and when the perfidious kiss of the traitor Judas betrayed Me to My enemies, I allowed Myself to be bound and led away like a malefactor. When I thus yielded Myself up to death for you, My child, think you that I was ignorant of the sort of return I was to receive at your hands? Ah! well I knew already the many, deliberate, gross offences with which you should requite My love. Nevertheless, I freely accepted of the bitter chalice, and offered Myself to the Father for you as readily as if I expected from you a lifelong service of fervent gratitude and love. What prodigal devotedness on My part! What black ingratitude on yours!

REFLECTION.—What baseness, to refuse my heart to Him Who has given His Blood for me; what perfidy! to betray Him Who offered His life for me, though in doing so He knew He was giving it for an ingrate. I cannot sufficiently condemn or punish myself for having repaid such love with such deliberate insult. I had forfeited all claim on His mercy both by the sin of Adam, and also by the personal sins He foresaw I would commit. In permitting me to fall into hell, He would have lost nothing but a wretch full of injustice and ingratitude towards his first Beginning and last End. May I spend the rest of my life in deploring and repairing the wrongs I have offered to Jesus, and in devoting myself un-

reservedly to His service and the promotion of his Glory.

PRACTICE.—1. Let the recollection of your past ingratitude serve to make you the more careful to avoid even the smallest deliberate faults, and to perform with exactitude and fervor even the least important duties. 2. Each time you repeat the act of contrition or receive absolution, unite yourself to Jesus in the garden bathed in a bloody sweat, and offering His life for your sins.

EXAMPLE.

Visit of Père Géramb to the Grotto of Gethsemani.

"The grotto in which Jesus prayed on the eve of His death," writes Père Géramb (*Pilgrimage to Jerusalem, letter* 14), "bears the name of the Grotto of Agony. It remains in precisely the same state as at the time of our Saviour. It forms a kind of vault, into which light is admitted by an opening overhead, which is grated. Formerly it was on a level with the surrounding ground, but now you have to descend into it by a flight of eight or ten steps. There is a door to it, of which the Franciscans keep the key. It was in this most sacred spot that the Saviour of the world endured the terrors of death; here He raised His trembling hands to the Eternal Father, His eyes flowing with tears of anguish, which, mingling with His sweat of blood, suffused His

Sacred Body, and saturated the earth on which He lay. Here it was, in a word, that the innocent Jesus underwent for us the full rigors of the Divine Justice. An altar is erected on the very spot formerly occupied by our Saviour, surmounted by a picture of the Agony, our Lord sustained by an angel, and the inscription: *Hic factus est sudor ejus, sicut guttæ sanguinis decurrentis in terram.* . . . One cannot look without a shudder on the place where Judas delivered over his Master to His enemies. It is a space of from fifteen to twenty feet long, enclosed within low walls, and is called *osculo*, from the passage of the Gospel: *Juda, osculo Filium hominis tradis?* "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke xxii. 48). The pilgrim, as soon as he has adored Jesus, betrayed and bound, gladly leaves the place without delay. Had the unhappy traitor, when making his sacrilegious compact with the Jews, said, Whomsoever I shall *strike*, that is He, hold Him fast; and afterwards, when, sword in hand, he headed the troop of deicides, had he inflicted a blow on his Divine Master, atrocious as such conduct would have been, it would, at least, have been free from the horrid act of hypocrisy. But nowhere in the annals of crime do we find a kiss selected as token of betrayal. 'Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He, hold Him fast;' what dreadful language! With the most tender sign of love, to sell a father, a friend, a benefactor, and thus to be-

tray Him into the hands of His most blood-thirsty enemies!"

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

The Sufferings and Humiliations of Jesus in Jerusalem.

Behold your God, My child, yielding Himself into the hands of these satellites of hell, suffering Himself to be dragged, as the most infamous of men, through the streets of Jerusalem, and conducted successively before Annas, Caiphas, Pilate, Herod, and then back again to Pilate; see Him bound to a pillar, and submitting to a bloody scourging, which reduced him to a state that ought to have awakened pity in the hardest heart; see Him afterwards shown to an infuriated rabble, who prefer to Him a malefactor and murderer, and clamor with cries of hatred for his death. See Him then dragged along to this most painful and ignominious punishment, and, finally, crucified between two thieves! What a spectacle does this present to the Christian, who must acknowledge to himself, It was on my account that the Son of God was thus cruelly treated. What admirable and touching instruction this scene conveys to us, teaching us to combat our evil nature, and to turn to good account the crosses and trials which God sends us. Through all these ignominies you have before you the God of resignation and patience, the God of humility

and gentleness, the Lamb who bore all without uttering a complaint. He is insulted, mocked, struck, covered with spittle, and He is silent; He is derided as a mock king, and overwhelmed with insults, and is silent; He is despised as a fool by Herod, and is silent; a miserable assassin is compared with Him, preferred before Him, and He is silent; the impious voices of those on whom He had heaped favors clamor for His death, and He is silent; by an act of the most culpable cowardice and most crying injustice, Pilate condemns Him to the felon's death, and still He is silent! Should not all this, My child, put to shame your impatience, your murmuring and want of resignation, when My providence permits anything contrary to your wishes or trying to your pride? I was innocent, you are guilty; I was the Saint of saints, you are a sinner; I was your Creator, you are but the frail work of My hands, who have nothing of your own but the sad reality of your sins, so many of them committed, alas! with such wilful deliberation. Study, My child, your Divine Model, and learn even thus late how you are henceforth to bear yourself amidst trials and temptations.

Reflection.—If the sufferings of Jesus Christ were related as those of a mere stranger, whose only claim on my sympathy was the fact of his being innocent, would I not be deeply moved, even to tears? If, moreover, I was told that this victim of jealous and unjust per-

secution had been thus loaded with reproaches for sake of me, how dear and sacred would not his name become to me, and with what lively emotions of gratitude and most tender love would not my heart be filled! Can I refuse to God that which I could not help giving under similar circumstances to my fellow-creature? Ah! if my heart has been cold and my eyes dry in sight of this God bruised by sufferings, and wounded to death through His love for me, may I now at least begin to follow in His footsteps; may I endeavor to copy the admirable pattern He has given me, and direct all my efforts to this end. Even thus I will still be making but a very inadequate return to Him who has loved me with such an unbounded love.

PRACTICE.—1. When you have to suffer anything in your affections, your honor, or self-love, call this to mind: My God has suffered much more than this for me. 2. In order to sanctify such humiliations or unkind treatment as you may meet with, unite them to the unheard-of outrages inflicted on the Divine Jesus before receiving the unjust sentence of death; endeavor to follow His example by bearing all in silence

EXAMPLE.

Conduct and dispositions of M. Olier under humiliations.

A person of mean condition and of an exceedingly violent temper, abusing the meek-

ness and charity of which M. Olier had given him most striking proofs, one day insulted him grossly before a large assemblage with such violence that all present expressed the utmost indignation. M. Olier alone was unmoved, and lost none of his habitual calmness. He seemed afterward to remember the insult only in order to show still greater kindness to the person from whom he had received it, and to render him many good services. When, shortly after, this man was imprisoned for some offence, M. Olier interested himself so earnestly in his behalf that he succeeded in getting him set at liberty. At a time when the enemies of religion pursued him with continual annoyances and persecution, to force him to resign his place at St. Sulpice, he was obliged to present himself before a personage of high rank and authority, who seemed to take a malicious pleasure in turning him into ridicule. M. Olier accepted this humiliation with sentiments of lively gratitude, uniting himself to the interior dispositions of our Saviour when derided at the court of Herod. "I never could have expected such an honor," he writes; "I bless and praise God with all my heart for such a signal favor; and I can never be sufficiently thankful to the person who has given me this opportunity of imitating the patience of my Divine Master." On another occasion, when the man of God was assailed by a wicked calumny, a friend, who was fully aware of his

innocence, begged of him to make the truth known, which he could easily have done. "Oh! no," he replied, "let us drink the chalice which Jesus is pleased to offer us; let us make a holy use of the cross, and remain on it until Jesus Christ Himself takes us down from it." Having said which, he remained silent, nor did he utter a single word in his own justification.—*Life of M. Olier.*

NINETEENTH DAY.

Consummation of the Sacrifice.

My disciples having abandoned Me in the Garden of Olives, I was left to bear alone the heavy weight of black ingratitude and revolting injustice that was heaped upon Me. When, My child, they covered My face with blows and spittle; when, through contempt, they put purple rags on my shoulders, and a reed in My hand for a sceptre; when they forced the thorny crown upon My temples, and thus covered My face with blood, My Heart was still calm, thinking of you and throbbing with love for you. Even at that most trying moment, when I heard Peter protest for the third time that he knew Me not, I cast another look upon him, but one of tenderness and love—a look which happily moved him to repentance and remorse. Still again, when, on the road to Calvary, compassionate hearts shed tears of sorrow for My sufferings, your Jesus shows

Himself, as ever, forgetful of Himself, and thinking only of the welfare of those who were dragging Him to death. "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke xxiii. 28). And when, arrived at Calvary, that altar of expiation whereon I was to consummate My sacrifice, I allowed myself to be nailed to the infamous gibbet, when from My pierced and mangled limbs flowed streams of Blood during the slow torture of the Crucifixion, when amidst My agony they continued to heap on Me cruel insults and words of ignominy, when to My parched and fevered lips they offered bitter vinegar and gall, still My tongue uttered naught but words of mercy and forgiveness. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). Thus throughout My Heart knew only love, and only prayed for those who gloated over My sufferings with fiendish hatred. Finally, "crying with a loud voice," I said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit; and saying this, I gave up the Ghost" (Luke xxiii. 46). O My child! can you be forgetful of the stupendous Sacrifice consummated on Calvary? Let the remembrance of it penetrate your heart, and inflame it with ardent gratitude and love. Direct its movements constantly to heaven, so that you may henceforth devote yourself without reserve to the service and love of the God who willingly became the Victim of His love for you.

REFLECTION.—To suffer and to atone—such is the lot of humanity, guilty in the fall of the first man. To endure with resignation, to follow Jesus, who deigns to walk before us in the way of sorrows—this is the true and only remedy. He had no sins to expiate, yet He came into the world, not to taste its joys, but to lead a life of sufferings, and end it by a cruel and violent death. Thus does He present Himself to me as a Pattern, to console and encourage me, and as a Model of submission and zealous love for the Will of His Heavenly Father. If, then, I do not mean to renounce my glorious title of Christian and disciple of the Cross, I should in all afflictions and trials adore and bless the Justice of God, and drink with courage the chalice which He presents to me.

PRACTICE.—1. Whatever may be your trials, "consider and see if there be any sorrow like to" that of Jesus on the Cross, the Man-God, whose only crime was His exceeding love of you. 2. Remember that being sinners, "it is only through trials that we can enter into the kingdom of heaven." Take consolation also from the thought that the way of suffering in which Jesus walks before us is the true way to heaven, and that "that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17).

EXAMPLE.

Visit of Père Géramb to the Holy Sepulchre.

"I had directed the dragoman of the monastery," writes Père Géramb, "to give notice to the Turkish guardians of the Holy Sepulchre to be there at five o'clock in the evening, to admit me to the Temple, in which I purposed spending my last night. Accordingly, as soon as I arrived, the gates were thrown open, and were closed again as soon as I had entered. The clang of the closing of those colossal doors, and the grating of the keys in the locks, caused me a kind of terror, and a great fear crept over me. . . . One o'clock struck. The Franciscan Fathers, assembled in their chapel, intoned the *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*, as I arose to anoint the Sacred Tomb, before which I had been so long prostrate. The odor of the ointment shed itself around. From thence I ascended to Golgotha, where I repeated the like ceremony, on the spot where the Cross was elevated. . . . I have experienced many deep griefs during my life; I have closed the eyes of a fond father, a tender mother, and a devoted wife; I have lost dearly-loved children; I have been taken prisoner two hundred leagues from France, and dragged through Germany to be shut up in the dungeons of Vincennes, from which I was liberated only on the entrance of the allies into Paris; I have had to endure what the

world esteems the greatest misfortunes; I have been calumniated and persecuted, and have met with very great ingratitude; but I can safely assert, in the presence of Him Who sounds the depths of all hearts, and before Whom I shall have soon to appear, that never before had grief moved my soul so acutely as when the moment came when I had to tear myself away for ever from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. As long as I live it shall be present to my mind, and deeply engraven on my heart; always must the recollection of it move and touch me, because it will always bring most vividly before my mind Jesus crucified for my salvation—that ineffable truth which I would fain have all mankind realize. He, indeed, is everything, and all that is not Him is naught but nothingness."—*Letters of Père Géramb, No.* 30.

TWENTIETH DAY.

Sentiments with which the Sight of a Crucifix should inspire the Heart of a Christian.

The sight of the Crucifix, My child, should move and inflame your heart. See the children of the world, how carefully they preserve the pictures of those to whom they are attached, how they gaze on them and kiss them with affectionate tenderness. Is it so between you and Me, My child? I have made for you the most heroic of sacrifices, in making which

I had no other interest but your good. How has this painful sacrifice been understood and appreciated? Had I done nothing of the kind for you, could you be less grateful than you are? What more could I have done than I have done to evince My love and ardent desire for your happiness; what more could you do than you are doing to show your thankless coldness and ingratitude? Could you have practised less the virtues of which I have given you the example? Could you have been more careless in studying to avoid all that would displease Me? Ah! how different should be your conduct if you but knew how to penetrate the depth of love, which the representation of the bloody scene on Calvary places before you. Yes, if you had contemplated the Crucifix with the spirit of faith, if you had thus gazed on My Hands and Feet pierced through with nails, My Side opened by the lance, you could not have resisted the impulse of a pious compassion; you would have been deeply and sincerely touched, and would have devoted yourself to My service with all the generosity and ardor of your heart, and My Heart would have rejoiced in the possession of yours. Not that I have any need of your love, or that your withholding it would in the least diminish My perfect and unalterable felicity, but, loving you as I do, and desirous of your happiness, I wish you to be wholly Mine. Yet how often have you allowed the spirit of darkness, My avowed enemy, to

triumph in your heart! Is it that he desires your happiness as I do, or that he has laid down his life to testify the like desire for your welfare?

Reflection.—Yes, the representation of my crucified Saviour ought to be sufficient to animate me with the liveliest sentiments of gratitude and devotion. However great the attractions that sin may have, they ought to yield before this august symbol of devoted love. What temptation is there that should not be vanquished by the thought: My God has sacrificed Himself in order to rescue me from the slavery of this bad thought, this sinful inclination? And, on the other hand, where is the sacrifice, however painful, that will not be softened and made comparatively easy by the sight of the sacred memorial of the bloody immolation of Himself, which God has made for my salvation? What! my Saviour has cheerfully submitted to the cruel scourging, the crowning with thorns, the agony of the crucifixion, and I hesitate, nay, refuse, to give up for His sake some passing guilty pleasure, some criminal indulgence! My God, following only the impulse of His love for me, has drained to its dregs the bitter cup of mental and bodily anguish, and I coldly turn away reluctant from the trifling sacrifices He asks of me, and reject the calls of His grace! O Sacred Image of my crucified Saviour! would that my eyes were constantly bent on you; then should I tread with firm steps

in the ways of a devoted, sincere, and generous piety!

PRACTICE.—1. Frequently fortify yourself with the sign of the Cross; often kiss the Crucifix with great reverence and devotion, particularly in times of temptation, sadness, or suffering. 2. Every time you behold a representation of Christ crucified evince some outward mark of respect towards this sacred monument of the great love of God for men. But take care that this outward act be accompanied by inward sentiments of tender, grateful love towards the Heart of Jesus, the Adorable Victim.

EXAMPLE.

Holy Sentiments of a poor Artisan.

In a rural district in France there lived a weaver, on whom the trials and afflictions of the world pressed most heavily. Poor, sick, and without any friend who could assist him, he underwent the most painful sufferings and privations. His wife, it is true, was most tenderly attached to him, but attacks of the deepest melancholy often affected her reason, when, far from lessening the miseries of her husband, she only rendered them the more bitter, and harder to be borne. Amidst his pressing wants and severe sufferings, this poor man evinced the most admirable fortitude and patience. Nothing seemed to disturb his equanimity or caused him to lose courage. "What are you

doing?" said a neighbor one day, finding him trying to work at his trade; "you have scarcely a breath of life, and cannot sit up without support, you are so weak and ill, and you still endeavor to work! Desist from the vain effort; give it up and take your rest, or, if you have any strength left, employ it rather in making your pitiable condition known to some charitable person who has it in his power to relieve you." "I will do nothing of the kind," the sick man replied. "I have discovered a treasure, and as long as I can enjoy it, though I may not be as comfortable as your kindness would have me, still my pains and privations will not be nearly as unbearable as you may imagine. See, my dear friend, the image of the Son of God crucified, fastened to the wall opposite. Behold my treasure. Death cannot terrify me so long as that life-giving figure is before me. I can never lack confidence, hope, courage, or even joy, so long as I can derive them from the Wounds of my Saviour. When racked by pain, and in want of everything, I console myself by considering that I have then attained to some slight resemblance of my expiring Jesus. When the evil increases and seems hardly bearable, I have recourse with the greater faith to the Crucifix, and there comes from it a strength that enables me to bear everything. How glorious is it for a poor man like me, who am regarded by other men as only a wretched outcast, to have the King of kings

as my Consoler and Model!"—*Extract from an unpublished manuscript.*

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

Jesus' Love for us manifested in the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist.

"Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv.) These words were addressed by Me to My disciples the night before My Passion. Yes, to lay down his life for his friend is the extreme mark of love that one man can show for another; but, My child, this sufficed not for your God. My Heart, in the incomprehensible treasures of its charity, has found a still more touching mark of love, and one more capable of moving and inflaming your heart. I desired, oh! with how longing a desire, to contract the most intimate union with you by giving you My very Self. Well might the angels look on in wonder, and ask how could I thus unite Myself to a lowly, sinful, miserable creature, to one so unworthy of My love. It is indeed true that in order to make Myself your nourishment, I have lowered, annihilated Myself. What, think you, must be the excess of that love that led Me to operate this ineffable Mystery, in which I, as it were, forget Myself in order to think exclusively of the poor exile redeemed by my Blood? I annihilated Myself in the Incarnation; what word

can, then, express what I have done in the institution of the Blessed Eucharist? In the Incarnation I concealed My Divinity, but in this Mystery I veil even My Humanity, and manifest My Presence only by the sweet love with which I inebriate those pure hearts who come to Me with a blessed hungering and thirst after justice. In this Sacrament I have borne in silence with the coldness, neglect, contempt, and sacrileges of eighteen centuries, rather than deprive My faithful friends of the consolation of being able to approach Me, not alone without fear, but with a filial confidence. I wished, My child, to bestow on you an incomparable proof of My love, and I have done so in the form of a Banquet—a form expressive of union and intimate friendship. And that this Banquet might be commensurate with My love, I have made it consist of a miracle infinitely beyond the thoughts or expectations of My creatures. This, My child, is what I have done for you in becoming your "daily Bread."

Reflection.—What a sad contrast exists between the Heart of Jesus and mine! between His love, so ardent, so generous, so excessive; and mine, so feeble, so languid and inconstant, so cowardly in making any sacrifice, and so little occupied with what ought to be the business and charm of my life! My Jesus, in order to gain my love, has wrought this, the greatest miracle of His infinite charity,

and I can still show myself cold and insensible to his love! For God alone I have no love, no gratitude! O God! truly and sovereignly amiable, Who hast so loved me, Thou Who hast formed all things out of nothing, "say only the word," put forth Thy grace, "and my soul," now so obdurate, "shall be healed," and for the time to come my only thought and desire shall be to love and serve Thee faithfully to the end.

PRACTICE.—1. Let it be your greatest desire to receive the Holy Communion, which is to the faithful a foretaste of heaven; but see that it be your study to bring to the reception of this Adorable Sacrament great purity of conscience, profound humility, and ardent love. 2. Try to spend as much as possible of the day of your communion, and that preceding it, in pious recollection, and in stirring up in your soul lively sentiments of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

EXAMPLE.

Wonderful Faith evinced by a young Girl towards the Blessed Sacrament.

Mary Anne Fitch was born in London, of Protestant parents, who, though in error, were remarkable for their kindness and moral virtues. They entrusted the care of their daughter's education to a French Catholic lady. The youthful Mary showed early signs of a desire to become a Catholic, which, however, she could not carry into effect till many years after.

Meantime, she disposed herself admirably to receive the grace of faith by her blameless and edifying conduct. The following little anecdote will show the high value she attached to the reception of the Blessed Eucharist. She had heard that pious Catholics observed the anniversary of their Baptism as a day of special devotion, and usually approached the Sacrament on that day. "This is the anniversary of your Baptism," she remarked on one occasion to her governess; "surely you have been to confession and Holy Communion?" The other, though chiding her for what she supposed to be curiosity, told her that her surmise was correct, that she had had the happiness that morning to receive the Blessed Sacrament. "Oh! then," replied the young girl, "God is still with you. Let me, I entreat, rest upon your bosom. I have never had the happiness before of being so near My Jesus, and I have so many things to say to Him, and favors to ask of Him." She remained for considerable time clinging to the governess, absorbed in meditation, until her mother, not knowing the cause, and fearing she was troublesome, called her away. Since such was her joy to be close to her Divine Saviour, what must have been her delight when, some years afterwards, she and her parents became Catholics! She lost no time in entering a convent, in order to satisfy her ardent desire for frequent Communion. We may judge of her holy disposi-

tions by the following extract from a letter she addressed to one of her friends, who had informed her that she had the care of the chapel in which the Holy of Holies reposed: "What a sweet occupation! to be called upon to make so many visits to the Blessed Sacrament. When you are arranging the chapel, all your movements are in the direct service of your Jesus. You are the happy servant of the Lord in an especial manner, and approach nearest to His Sacred Person hidden in the Sacrament of His love. God, assuredly, wishes to draw you forcibly to Him, and to take entire possession of your heart, since He assigns you an employment in which you cannot take one single step which does not tend to honor His august sanctuary."—*Heroines of Charity, by Abbé Carron.*

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

The continued Presence of Jesus in the Tabernacle.

Not alone have I desired to nourish your soul with My very Self, to strengthen, console, and assist you to gain heaven; I have also remained, My child, permanently in the Blessed Eucharist, in order to receive your visits, and enable you to draw constantly as much as you desire from this source of grace, each time that your wants or your love lead you to the foot of My altar. This, My child, is a great favor. A prince who would deign to take up his dwelling amongst his poor, ignorant subjects, to en-

lighten and assist them in their miseries, soothe their sorrows, and lavish his favors upon them—who could ever sufficiently testify their admiration of such generous benevolence, such rare devotedness, such sublime tenderness as this would be! I, My child—not a mere earthly king, but the King of kings, the eternal Ruler of the universe—I have deigned to take up my abode with you; I have made Myself a dwelling on earth in order to be the inseparable Companion of your exile, the Consoler of your troubles, the Physician of your ills, and the Treasure of your poverty. I give you free access at all hours to My Presence. I, the inexhaustible Source of joy and consolation, of courage and strength, I invite and call you to Me. I offer you My Heart, so full of love and so penetrated with the most tender compassion for the heavy burden of mortality, under which I see you ready to sink; but, O ye heavens! be seized with astonishment! My child has disdained My tabernacle, and has, but too closely, imitated those worldlings who weary themselves in the pursuit of lies and vanity. The crowd press to the palaces of the great ones of earth to obtain some vain honor or other fleeting advantage; and I, the Sovereign Dispenser of the only real good, from Whom you should obtain strength to bear with courage all the crosses of life, and in Whom you should find the fruition of all your reasonable desires; I Who am ready to secure for you a life beyond

the tomb, "where sorrow shall be no more, nor mourning, nor weeping," but unbounded and endless felicity; I, My child, Who offer all these to you, am slighted, neglected, and forsaken!

REFLECTION.—Were I weak and tottering, would I refuse support; were I sunk in abject poverty, would I reject a treasure; had I suffered some heart-rending grief, would I refuse consolation; if a prey to sorrow and affliction, would I spurn the services of a true friend who would pour into my wounded heart the balm of sympathy and comfort? O man of little faith! I profess to believe that Jesus, Who is all-powerful, Who has deigned to make Himself my most amiable and tender Friend, is near me in the august Sacrament of the altar, and yet I have not had recourse to Him for true strength, real riches, solid joys, but have acted as if I preferred my weakness, indigence, and miseries! . . . Should not love and gratitude so powerfully attract me to His Adorable Feet as to need a violent effort to tear myself away? How culpably remiss is, then, my indifference and tepidity, when not even my own manifest interest succeeds in making me have recourse to this unfailing source of strength and consolation!

PRACTICE.—1. Visit each day the Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, approaching Him with holy joy and unbounded confidence. 2. When obliged to forego this precious privilege, visit the Divine Jesus at least in spirit.

The Prophet Daniel, when captive at Babylon, thrice a day opened the window of his room, which looked towards Jerusalem, and, kneeling, worshipped the God of Israel as if he had been in the Temple.

EXAMPLE.

Tender Devotion of St. Liguori towards Jesus in the Most Adorable Sacrament.

The devotion of St. Alphonsus Liguori towards the Blessed Sacrament dated from his earliest youth. Amidst the distractions of the world he contrived to withdraw each day, for at least some moments, from his studies or other occupations, to make a visit to the Most Holy Sacrament, finding a thousand times more happiness in uniting his heart with that of Jesus, and in communing sweetly with Him before His Tabernacle, than in any worldly amusements. After his elevation to the priesthood, and when he had founded the Order of our Holy Redeemer, his desire to taste how sweet the Lord is to those who seek Him became even more remarkable. When staying at any house of his Order, where he possessed the facility of indulging this devotion, he availed himself of it so far as to pass each day many hours before the Blessed Sacrament. Often he arose during the night, and going into the choir with bare feet, lest he should disturb the community, threw himself, as it were, into the arms of Jesus. During his

episcopate, he was often remarked to spend a long time before the tabernacle in his cathedral, or some other church, and people went to be edified by the spectacle of a saint who seemed to converse visibly with God. Having resigned his bishopric, and retired to St. Michael's, he could devote himself the more readily to his favorite devotion. He spent habitually fully eight hours a day in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament; and, at times, his soul became so ravished in the contemplation of God hidden in the Eucharist that he would rise up suddenly and stretch out his arms towards the tabernacle, as if to press his Jesus to his heart, and make Him amends for the neglect and forgetfulness of so many Christians. He felt it a most painful privation when his infirmities rendered him unable to go to the church. To console him, his director reminded him that he had an altar in his room. "Ah! but Jesus is not here," he replied, with tears in his eyes. In his last illness, when the priest approached to give him the Holy Viaticum, he was heard to exclaim in pious transport, "Come, come, my beloved Jesus!" Fortified by this Heavenly Food, he remained a long time in profound contemplation, and from the ardent sighs that burst from his heart might be inferred the gratitude and tender love for his Divine Master by which he was penetrated.—*Life of St. Liguori, by Abbé Verdier.*

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

The Glory given in Heaven to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

You have considered, My child, how amiable and adorable is My Heart, and the extent of Its love for men; come now and accompany Me, even to the bosom of My heavenly inheritance, and contemplate Its glory. Since I have vanquished death, and ascended triumphantly into heaven, and since My Body has become clothed with the splendor of the saints, and the blessed immortality which is the just recompense of My labors, My sufferings, and My Blood, My Heart is inundated with an ineffable joy. This Heart, which for you was humbled, saturated with reproaches, and plunged in a sea of bitterness and sorrow, now reposes after Its labors, enjoys peace after Its tribulations, joy after Its sadness, and triumph and glory after Its tribulation. From Its sacred Wound flow on the happy inhabitants of the eternal tabernacles streams of love, happiness, and glory unalterable; they approach to unite themselves to It as their Centre, and do homage to It for their victories and their crowns. They live for and in this Heart, and thus realize the intimate union which I asked of My Eternal Father for the elect at My last supper, when I prayed that "they might be one as We also are one." Would that you were capable, My child, of contemplating this marvel, even

for a moment! but as in this your time of exile the light of the eternal day and of the lasting city cannot shine, you must be content to adore humbly, and contemplate by the light of faith this secret of heaven, and, leaning on hope, expect "until the shadows may retire, and the hills of the world be bowed down." Yes, My child, adore, hope, and long to see and share these delights of the Saints, and be assured that from the summit of Its glory My Heart constantly thinks of you, cherishes you, and is never, even for an instant, forgetful of your interests.

Reflection.—Why is not this glory, this felicity, this perfect union with the Heart of Jesus, which makes us in some sort participators of the Divine Nature—why is not this the constant object of my efforts? Why do I not continually sigh for the happy moment when, bursting the fetters of mortality, I shall enter into eternal life? For that will not be a life that may end to-morrow, or whose joys can be saddened by tedium, disgust, or grief. Oh! that I had ever in my mind and heart the thought and desire of that which is promised to my love and perseverance! Would that, from this time forward, I might concentrate all the powers of my soul in the Heart of Jesus, so that he might elevate me above all passing things, and attach me firmly to the "treasure which faileth not, and which no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth" (Luke xii. 33). Love,

divine love! Heaven, beautiful heaven! be you always in my thoughts during this weary temporal life, and be you my blessed portion in eternity!

PRACTICE.—1. Give honor and glory constantly to the adorable Heart of Jesus, and beg often and earnestly of Him to make Himself known and loved by men. 2. Look upon yourself as a pilgrim and wayfarer, and sigh for the time when you shall reach the term of your exile, and see the face of the Lord.

EXAMPLE.

The ardent Desires of a holy Monk for Heaven.

"We arrived at the monastery of Larissa," writes the Abbé Géramb, "and were met at the door by an old man, who had been waiting for us. His hair, as white as snow, and beard reaching down to his breast, gave him a most venerable appearance. His complexion was fresh, and his smile that of an angel. I could easily have imagined him one of the *ancients* who surround the throne of the Lamb. He welcomed me in German, and proved to be Father Vital Filkuka, a native of Jamnitz, in Moravia, where he was born in 1757. For fifteen years, his extraordinary virtue and piety have been the edification of this country. From the moment of my arrival, I never ceased admiring his holy zeal. How full are the days of the just! He was the first to rise in the morning and ring the 'Angelus'; shortly

after, he celebrated Holy Mass; on leaving the church, he was surrounded by a crowd of sick and afflicted persons, who assembled from various parts to receive help from him in their various wants. He never sent away any one unheard. He listened to the recital of their miseries; consoled them, as he so well knew how to do; dressed their wounds, gave advice, remedies, food, money—in a word, all that the poverty in which he lives permitted. During the day he works in the garden, watches over the management and cleanliness of the chapel and sacristy, and enters into all the household details, which he manages with order and economy. Change of occupation is his only recreation, and night surprises him amidst his labors. He has had his coffin made, which he visits frequently, and when he looks at it, it is with joy, such as that with which a worldling would regard a costly-built palace. His only regret is that he does not already lie in it. 'Behold my dwelling,' he says, and then exclaims with saintly ardor and love, 'My soul has been too long a wanderer. Who will give me the wings of a dove, that I may fly away and be at rest?' Yet, notwithstanding his constant thought of death and burning desire for eternal life, he is always most cheerful, and his gaiety is most natural, unreserved, and sweet."
—*Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Mount Sinai.*

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

Modes of Speech used by Jesus to express His Love for us.

Having now considered the prodigies of My love; My sorrows and humiliations from the Garden of Olives to Calvary; the ineffable mystery of the Eucharist, which is the memorial of the wonders of My charity; having reflected on that eternal happiness and glory which I have purchased by My sufferings, and the participation of which is to be the reward of your perseverance; consider now the touching words I make use of to express My love for you, and which are so well calculated to win your heart. My love for you, My child, has made Me your *Deliverer*. Full of compassion and generous devotedness, I have discharged your debts to the Eternal Justice, and have sacrificed all in order to redeem you. For your salvation I subjected Myself to the sorrows and privations of My mortal life, yielded My Body to most bitter sufferings, and expired on the infamous gibbet. I thus have become your *Ransom* and *Victim*, and that not only once on Calvary, but still each day on My altars. My love, moved to compassion at beholding the deplorable state to which you had been reduced by original sin and your personal crimes, has made Me your *Physician*, full of tender solicitude for your state, and ready to pour oil and wine into your wounds. "I have

borne your infirmities and carried your sorrows." But I had also to cure your ignorance—fatal consequence of the fall of Adam—and for this end I brought down from heaven "the words of eternal life." I came to teach you the ways of truth and justice, and, to encourage you in the practice of My precepts, I have Myself set you the example. My love for you still makes Me be your *Pastor* and *Guide*. "I am the Good Shepherd, I know My sheep and My sheep know Me. I am the Good Shepherd, I lay down My life for My sheep." When you had gone astray, I sought you out, and restored you rejoicing to the fold. I nourish you with My flesh, and delight to lavish on you the tenderest proofs of My affection. I say to you in the overflowing love of My Heart, "Can a mother forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isaias xlix. 15).

REFLECTION.—I was by nature a child of wrath, a slave of the devil, and under sentence of eternal death, and yet, all unworthy that I was and am, and though He fully foresaw how unfaithfully I would correspond to His infinite mercy and love, my Jesus has in his loving goodness deigned to deliver me. I was a slave of Satan, and Jesus has made me a child of God; what should I not do to preserve this magnificent title? I deserved hell, and he has bestowed on me a right to eternal glory; shall I ever again expose myself to the risk of for-

feiting this privilege? I was blind, and He has made me to see; I was deaf to grace, and He has opened the ears of my soul; I was dumb, incapable of so much as pronouncing the name of my Father Who is in heaven, and He has loosed my tongue to bless and praise Him. I was lame, I had not of myself the power to take even one step in the paths of virtue and true happiness, and He has strengthened me to walk with confidence. I was feeble, and unable to contend with the devil and corrupt nature, and He has fortified and armed me for the combat. I was covered with the leprosy of sin, and He has cleansed me. I was dead in sin, and He has restored me the life of my soul. . . . O eternal life! which I cannot ever sufficiently esteem, be always precious to me beyond all other goods. My sweet Jesus! what return can I make Thee for such and so many favors? Can I for the future feel any difficulty in being constantly and gratefully mindful of such infinite charity?

PRACTICE.—1. Be careful not to admit into your mind the foolish idea that, because God has given Himself for your ransom, you have nothing to do for yourself. 2. Instead of listening to the promptings of nature, which would incline you to relax your pious practices, study rather to combat them with a holy constancy through motives of gratitude and love towards your Deliverer, your Good Pastor, and your heavenly Physician.

EXAMPLE.

Fidelity of the Duchess d'Aiguillon in her Practices of Devotion.

M. de Ferrier, of the Congregation of St. Sulpice, in his Memoirs, bears the most honorable testimony to the virtues and great piety of the Duchess d'Aiguillon. He cites various traits in her character well calculated to inspire a holy emulation in the souls of those who aspire to zeal in the service of their Divine Master. "My theme would be inexhaustible," he writes, "were I to attempt to enumerate the acts of benevolence of this lady. I may say, in a word, that her piety and charity were beyond conception. I will here limit myself to the relation of an anecdote that will serve to show the depth of her piety. I went into the church of St. Sulpice one night at about 11 o'clock. After kneeling some time before the Blessed Sacrament, I heard the door open. At first I paid no attention to this circumstance, thinking that it was one of the clergy coming to bring the Holy Viaticum to some dying person. After a while, I noticed that some one came and knelt behind me very quietly. When I arose to leave, I found it was the duchess. I expressed my surprise to see her here after midnight, and asked her the reason of it; she replied that having been occupied during the day, she could not get time to perform her devotions, so, returning from the

Palais Royal (where the court was held), and wishing to fulfil that duty, she had begged the bell-ringer to open the church for her, as she thought she could pray better there than at home. I honored her great piety with all my heart, and left her to continue her devotions before the altar of the Blessed Sacrament."—*Life of M. Olier, Founder of the Seminary of St. Sulpice.*

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

Jesus our Friend, our Brother, and the Spouse of our Soul.

Love, My child, has made me your *Friend*—a friend who bestows gifts lavishly, who bears with all, and is ready to pardon every offence; a friend who is constant under all circumstances, in prosperity and adversity, in joy and sorrow, in life and death. I have loved you beyond what any other friend could have done, and have commanded all others to love you as themselves under pain of incurring My displeasure. My love has led Me to even nourish you with My own Flesh and Blood, whilst waiting to share with you My own heavenly bliss, and inebriate you with the torrents of delight that flow from the bosom of My Divinity, hereafter. Love has made Me your *Brother;* your brother according to nature—have I not become like unto you in all things, sin excepted; your brother according to grace—have you not become the child of

God through the application of My merits? When, after My resurrection, I said to My disciples, I ascend to my Father and your Father, you were as fully in My thoughts as they. By becoming your brother, I have bestowed on you a right of inheritance, making you co-heir with your Saviour; and your fidelity to grace will put you into possession of the magnificent glory acquired by My labors and sufferings. Love has also made Me your *Spouse;* see by what a powerful tie I have united Myself to you on the Cross, by giving My Blood for your redemption, and in the Eucharist by identifying Myself with you as intimately as corporal food becomes identified with the body it sustains. I have endowed your soul with most precious gifts, and crowned it with my own merits. All that I possess, Myself even, I have bestowed on you, and My Heart delights to call you by the sweet, endearing name of My love, My beloved!

REFLECTION.—Jesus, my Friend, Brother, and Spouse! what consideration can be more touching to a soul at all capable of being moved? Ah! what happiness! to be lifted up from the depths of misery in which I had been born, even to the sublime dignity assured to me by God Himself having assumed these endearing titles to draw me wholly to Him and win me to His love. But how little have I hitherto corresponded with this tender love, how unworthy have I shown myself of such a

Friend, Brother, and Spouse! I have had far too little horror of sin, which tarnishes the purity of my soul and makes it offensive in His eyes; and but little zeal in aiming at perfection. O my God! grant that for the future I may never lose sight of the dignity to which Thou hast raised me, but, on the contrary, make it my constant aim and study to correspond faithfully to Thy tenderness and love!

PRACTICE.—1. Avoid with the greatest care the least deliberate sin; every sin tends to weaken the love which should unite you to Jesus, your Friend, your Brother, and your Spouse. 2. When you find you have committed a fault, try to repair it as quickly as possible by practising the contrary virtue, or by an act of sorrow and reparation to the Heart of Jesus.

EXAMPLE.

Horror of the least Fault evinced by a young Girl.

Anne Felicitas de Netumières had for her director M. Boursoul, a holy priest of Rennes. In order to inspire his spiritual child with a great horror of sin, the man of God used frequently to repeat to her this saying: Watch continually over yourself, in order not to offend God. His words fell upon fertile soul, and bore fruit a hundred-fold. But it was afterwards, when she became a religious, that she more especially put in practice the maxim of her holy director. The fact that God was pre-

sent was ever uppermost in her thoughts. At one time she would contemplate our Divine Saviour as the Husbandman rooting out from her soul all that was not perfect in His sight; at another time she considered Him as a Teacher, imparting to her lessons of sublime wisdom; again, as the tender Parent who corrects his child because He loves it; often, also, and more frequently, she thought of Him as her adorable and beloved Spouse. One day, having detected herself in a fault, which another of a less timid conscience would have rather regarded as a scruple, as it occurred more through mistake than design, the bitterness of her regret was intense. She reproached herself constantly with it, and had recourse to numerous acts of penance, in order to appease the anger of Heaven, which she feared she had merited. She no longer felt the same consolation in communing with God, and the idea that He had withdrawn Himself from her filled her with poignant regret. She looked upon herself as the most ungrateful of creatures, and saw in her Divine Spouse only an angry Judge, ready to punish her for her infidelity. But our Lord soon restored her to her peace of mind by reviving in her soul the joy of His Divine love, and a filial confidence in His Sacred Heart. We find her giving utterance to the following admirable sentiments in a letter to a friend: "Repair your fault at the foot of the Crucifix by tender protestations,

press your lips to the Wounds of your Saviour, and say to Him, I am penetrated with sorrow for having wounded Thee, O my good God! My heart has been unguarded, but it has not ceased to love Thee. With the whole strength of my will I resolve to die rather than ever offend Thee again. May every pulsation of my heart be a new act of love, of regret for having offended Thee, and of fervent desire to publish Thy wonderful goodness to me, an ungrateful, unworthy sinner."—*Christian Heroines, by Abbé Carron.*

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

Inestimable Advantages of loving our Divine Lord.

Not to love Me, My child, is *injustice*, since I am the Sovereign Good; it is *ingratitude*, since I have first loved you, and with what a lavish love; it is *folly*, for only in loving your Jesus, and loving Him above all things, can you find true happiness for this life and eternity. Without My love, of what use will learning be to you, or riches, or all the goods of this earth? But with My love, that which otherwise would be worthless becomes profitable. My love soothes those sorrows and misfortunes which all must encounter in their journey through life, and renders sickness, labor, adversity, contempt, and the other ills that afflict fallen nature, not only bearable, but changes them into sources of consolation,

as so many pledges of your attaining one day to the true life, where all shall be computed and rewarded a hundredfold. My love is a priceless boon. "Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or earth" (*Imit. of Christ*, b. iii. c. 5). Ah! if you would only let it reign in your heart without hindrance or reservation, this love would be your solace and support, your comfort and your peace. What more desirable than that "peace of God which surpasseth all understanding," of which My love is the source; what to be compared to the pure sweet joy, which I bestow with delight on those souls who seek and desire but Me alone, and consecrate their hearts to My service? Study, My child, to render yourself deserving of this great happiness.

Reflection.—The Heart of Jesus offers me most precious favors, and only awaits my acceptance of them, yet am I in the same indigence and misery! To draw abundantly from this treasure my life should "be hidden in God," but, far from this being so, it is engrossed by the perishable joys of the world, the gratification of sense, and the petty, unworthy passions which I allow to reign in my soul. May I now renounce, generously and finally, all that interferes with my belonging solely to Jesus and living wholly for His love! May nothing, for the future, occupy my heart

that would tend to exclude from it this sacred love, which "has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8). May I henceforth "mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 2).

PRACTICE.—1. Labor to establish in your heart a holy solitude, where, even in the midst of worldly cares, you may preserve the recollection of the presence of Jesus, especially on the days on which you have the happiness of receiving Him in the Holy Communion. 2. Let the animating principle of all your thoughts, words, and actions emanate from this Divine Heart, so that all may proceed from His love, and tend to unite you the more closely to it.

EXAMPLE.

Few have succeeded in attaining to such a constant, faithful recollection of the presence of God as did Mademoiselle Victorine de Gallard Teraube, of whom mention has already been made. Amidst the most distracting occupations she maintained an intimate union with her Divine Spouse. In obedience to her parents, she mixed in the most brilliant society, without, however, allowing her habitual recollection to be interrupted. This truly interior soul contrived frequently to make a retreat of three or four days, surrounded by her relatives and friends, without their being at all aware of what she was doing, or

being able to perceive any change in her usual gay and pleasant manner. Previous to the Feast of the Assumption, 1831, she formed the resolution of consecrating an hour to Jesus Christ every day; this she called "the hour of perfect happiness," during which she applied herself to perform all her actions solely to please Him, and with the utmost possible perfection. Towards the end of the January following, the grace of God impelled her to thus consecrate to her Beloved, not only one, but each hour of the day. And at the commencement of Lent, the same year, she wrote, "I have commenced this holy season with a firm resolution to correspond entirely and perfectly to the graces which my good God grants me unceasingly, and I have determined to aim at doing even the most trivial action with the greatest possible perfection."

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

Happiness Promised to the Poor in Spirit; to the Meek and Humble.

I have reminded you, My child, of the various titles on which I justly claim your love; listen now to the characteristics by which this love is to be recognized. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," blessed those who have left all to follow Me, blessed those whose hearts are detached from the things of this world, those who endure poverty without murmuring or repining, those who are not inordinately and fool-

ishly attached to riches—blessed are such as these, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Can you find it hard to detach your heart from the things of this life, when such detachment is to put you in possession of an eternal kingdom, and unite you inseparably to God? Encourage yourself to the sacrifice by the example of Me, your God. I was born of a poor mother, I was confided to the care of a poor artisan, and was supported by the work of My Own hands. Later on, when fulfilling My public mission, I associated poor fishermen in the work of the ministry, and chose to depend on alms for My support. Even now I am content to reside on the humblest altars and in the poorest tabernacles.

"Blessed are the meek," blessed they who keep themselves free from bitterness, pride, and self-love, blessed they who respect the unfortunate, blessed they who oppose not temper to temper, violence to violence, but seek to correct the faults of others by forbearance and patience—blessed are such, "for they shall possess the land," the true land of promise, flowing with milk and honey, where all sweetness abounds. True, My child, it is difficult, when sourness and crossness is in the heart, to restrain one's self from venting them on others; but look on your Jesus, and you will learn to conquer yourself. Behold the innocent Lamb, mute before His persecutors, behold Me benign towards sinners, serene amidst the turbulent,

bearing with calumny in humble, silent patience, and, even still, patient and silent amidst the profanations and sacrileges inflicted on Me in the Adorable Sacrament!

REFLECTION. —Goodness, kindness, mercy, benignity, clemency, and forbearance—these words are insufficient to express the divine sweetness and meekness of the Heart of Jesus. And I, to whom it has been granted to be so often united to him in Holy Communion, I am, alas! still prone to impatience and resentment, still full of bitterness against those who displease me, and even against those who for my good would remind me of my faults. All this comes of my pride, which will not bear with contradiction or humiliation. And what nourishes this spirit of pride? Is it not an ill-regulated, inordinate self-love, and an undue attachment to the things of this life? Were I truly poor in spirit, if God alone were the beginning and end of all my desires, I would act solely under the influence of His grace, and would on all occasions practise that meekness of which Jesus has given me so frequent and so touching an example.

PRACTICE.—1. In order to detach yourself from all that is not God, often call to mind the dreadful account you will one day have to render for all the gifts of body or mind with which you have been endowed. What folly to attach your heart to that which may become hereafter a cause of condemnation! 2. Habitu-

ate yourself to keeping silent when disposed to be annoyed with anything that goes against your self-love or your temper; it is the best means of acquiring that command requisite in order to govern yourself according to the rule of Christian meekness.

EXAMPLE.

St. Elizabeth—her Practice of Poverty of Spirit.

The life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary presents one of the most beautiful models of the practice of that poverty of spirit so much recommended in the Gospel. "After the premature death of her youthful spouse," writes Montalembert, "God took the place of all else in her heart. Misfortune seemed bent on overwhelming her. She, who had fed so many poor, and so often harbored the destitute, is cruelly driven from her palace, to wander through the streets with her helpless babes, a prey to want and cold. When at length justice is done her, it finds her devoid of all further concern for this life. Left a widow at twenty, she rejects the addresses of a powerful and wealthy prince; the world has attractions for her no more; the ties of earthly love being severed, Divine love takes its place in her heart. She unites herself to her heavenly Spouse in an indissoluble union, and seeks and finds Him in the poor and the unhappy. Having disposed of all her possessions in works of

charity, she devotes herself to the service of the poor. She becomes poor, the better to understand and be able to comfort the miseries of the poor, and devotes her life to the exercise of the lowliest and most revolting offices towards them. In vain her father, the king of Hungary, sends a court messenger to bring her back to him. He finds her at her spinning-wheel, decided on preferring the kingdom of heaven to the splendors of a royal home. "Say, my lord, to the king, my father," she replies, "that I find more happiness in this lowly life than he can in his regal pomp, and that, far from afflicting himself on my account, he ought rather to rejoice that he has a child in the service of the great King of heaven." In recompense for her austerities, voluntary poverty, and the obedience to which she each day bent her will, her Divine Spouse bestowed upon her a holy joy and supernatural strength. Amidst calumnies, mortifications, and privations, she knew not what it was to feel a pang of sadness, and a look from her sufficed to comfort the sorrows and sufferings of others. In the flower of life, she is already ripe for heaven, and she expires with a canticle of triumph on her lips, which is taken up and re-echoed by the choirs of heaven."—*Life of St. Elizabeth, by Montalembert.*

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

Happiness promised to those who Mourn, and to those who Hunger and Thirst after Justice.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. v.) Nature, My child, cannot understand this happiness, for her eyes are carnal, and see not the things that are of God. Still, it is not the less true that for the faithful there is joy even in tears. Oh! how consoling, amidst the bitterest afflictions, to think that we tread the way tinged with the Blood of our Saviour, the way by which it was necessary that the Man-God should enter into His glory! How comforting the thought that "that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17). Yes, My child, if a few moments are nothing in comparison to a whole life, what are a few days, a few years, what even the longest life, considered with regard to eternity?

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill" (Matt. v.) Blessed are they who give to God what they owe Him, and to their neighbor his just due. Blessed they who burn with the desire of seeing the undoubted claims of the Most High recognized by all men, and the injustice which so much dishonors the world diminish day by day. Blessed they who hunger after the perfection to which all Chris-

tians should aspire; even in this life they shall be filled from the abundance of My love, and in heaven they shall have all that their hearts can desire, being made partakers of My Own ineffable and unending felicity.

REFLECTION.—Have I, up to this, borne afflictions in the spirit of a true disciple of Jesus, crowned with thorns? Have I looked up to Calvary with a great faith, profiting by the example there set me; and to heaven, where my Divine Saviour points me out the place reserved as the reward of my fidelity in His service? Have I hungered and thirsted after justice? Can I say to God with the Royal Prophet, "A fainting hath taken hold of me, because of the wicked that forsake Thy law?" (Ps. cxviii. 53.) Have I been actuated by a pressing desire to sanctify myself daily more and more, and to become in my thoughts and desires, in my words and works, more alike to Jesus, my Divine Model? Instead of advancing, have I not rather retrograded, in the ways of justice and holiness? Am I not now become less pleasing in the sight of God, less fervent in prayer, less ready to testify my love for Him, less pained at the consideration of the offences offered Him? Alas! it is but too true that I have allowed my first fervor to grow cold, and that the abundant graces I have received have, through my want of correspondence, only resulted in a deplorable relaxation.

PRACTICE.—1. Make use of afflictions and

trials as a means of detaching yourself from things created, and attaching you more closely to God, the only real and unchangeable Good. You will thus merit the consolation promised to those who mourn in the spirit of a true Christian. 2. Endeavor each day to advance a step in the way of perfection. Should you even fall often, humble yourself before God, and arise each time with redoubled courage and confidence, and with a still more ardent desire to advance in God's service. If we root out each year, says the author of the Imitation, one single vice, we shall soon be perfect.

EXAMPLE.

St. Francis Borgia: His complete Resignation to the Will of God.

His wife, the Duchess Eleanora de Castro, falling dangerously ill, Francis, who was tenderly attached to her, omitted nothing in order to obtain from God her restoration, redoubling for that purpose his fasts, prayers, and charities to the poor. One day, being prostrate in prayer, he heard a voice within him, saying: "If you still wish it, I will prolong her life, but I warn you that it will be to neither her advantage nor yours." He was convinced that this was an admonition from heaven; accordingly, melting into tears, and burning with love for God, he cried out: "Who art Thou, O Lord! and who am I, that my will should be done rather than Thine? Thou alone

knowest what is profitable for us. Thy Will be done." After this, the illness of the duchess increased, and she expired on the 27th of March, 1546. Soon after, he made a retreat, and at its conclusion determined on consecrating himself to the service of God in the religious state, making choice of the Society of Jesus, chiefly because it is against the rule of that order for its members to aspire to any ecclesiastical dignity. His sacrifice of himself to God was without reserve. He made his will, paid in advance any claims that might be made upon him, and when he had thus arranged all his affairs, "At last," he said, "my chains are broken; my soul is as the bird that has escaped from the fowler's net." Dead to the world and self, deeply impressed with the consciousness of his own nothingness, and the grandeur of the Divine Goodness, he sighed for God with a constant fervor, deploring, at the same time, the blindness of worldlings, whose aspirations extended not beyond this present life. A lady of high rank, expressing her surprise at the great equanimity with which he received intelligence of the sudden death of his daughter, the Countess de Lerma, "Madam," he replied, "she was only lent to me; the Master has called her to Himself. Should I not thank Him for having left her with me so long, and for now taking her, as I hope, to a participation of His Own happiness and glory?" On a similar occasion he thus expressed him-

self: "Ever since the Lord has bestowed on me the grace of calling me to his service, and of giving Him my whole heart, I have tried to conform so to His Will as that no creature, living or dead, may be capable of causing me anxiety or trouble."—*Lives of the Saints, by Godescard.*

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

Happiness promised to the Merciful, and to the Clean of Heart.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. v.) Blessed they who practise charity towards the sick and the afflicted, and who, should it not be in their power to render material aid, at least try to soothe their sufferings by words of sympathy and kindness. This, My child, is the most acceptable offering men can make to Me; I will have mercy and not sacrifice (Matt. ix. 13). Inasmuch as you shall have compassion on your brethren, I will deal compassionately with you; as you have done to others, it shall be done to you in return; "with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. vii. 2). "Blessed are the clean of heart" (Matt. v.), because on such a heart it pleases Me to impress My image, serving, as it does, as a beautiful mirror to reflect the rays of My adorable beauty. Blessed are such, "for they shall see Me, their God," contemplating Me here with the eyes of faith, and hereafter, "face to face,"

when death shall draw aside the veil; then shall they behold Me with an unending delight, and love me with all the powers of their souls, being "inebriated with the plenty of My house, and made to drink of the torrent of My pleasure" (Ps. xxxv.) Behold, My child, the value of a pure heart; see how you should prize this holy virtue, so pleasing to My Divine Heart, and how carefully you should watch lest a too earthly affection should tarnish this delicate flower, whose perfume rises before Me as a sweet odor. Purity of heart is as polished glass or refined gold, it is like a lily of dazzling whiteness, or a limpid fountain; the lightest breath of temptation, if you fail in vigilance, may tarnish and sully all its beauty.

REFLECTION.—How much do I not stand in need of this mercy? Alas! who could count all the expiation I owe to the Divine Justice on account of the years of my life now past and gone? And even still does not each passing day only add to the account of my stewardship, which I shall have to render hereafter? But God is so good, He desires to show towards me the like mercy that I shall have shown towards my fellow-creatures. Ah! if in the past I had better understood the great advantages I should derive from this goodness of my Saviour, how zealously would I have applied myself to the exercise of works of mercy towards others, alleviating their wants, assuaging their sorrows, sympathizing with them in their mise-

ries, and bearing with their defects with sweetness and patience! . . . Do I not particularly need the exercise of the Divine mercy for having so often defaced in myself the image of God? And with what care should I not guard the purity of my heart, after having so often, perhaps, allowed passion to profane in me "the temple of the Holy Ghost!" (1 Cor. vi.) Oh! how culpable shall I be if, after having been so often the victim of my imagination, my memory, my senses, and affections, I do not henceforth more strictly guard against these dangerous faculties, which constantly expose me to the danger of the most lamentable faults!

PRACTICE.—1. Do your neighbor all the good in your power, whatever repugnance you may feel towards him, and do it in that kind and gentle manner that renders it the more to be prized; but take care to do all for the love of Jesus; to serve your neighbor through mere human affection will not merit the blessing promised by our Lord to the merciful. 2. Fear and "flee as from the face of a serpent" (Ecclus. xxi. 2) all that would corrupt the heart or tend to flatter the senses, that you may be of the pure of heart who shall see God.

EXAMPLE.

Touching Charity of an Arab Family.

"Balbeck," writes Père Géramb, "is the Heliopolis, or city of the sun, of the ancients.

A dilapidated wall, which formerly surrounded it, gives an idea of its former extent. With the exception of a few poor houses, the interior contains nothing but ruins. The residence of the bishop is but a cabin, darker and smaller than those of the peasants in Europe. Not wishing to inconvenience the bishop by seeking for hospitality, and yet wishing to be as near as possible to the celebrated temple of the city of the sun, I sought a place of rest near a mill, under some trees. I had been established there about an hour, when a child, wretchedly clad, but with a most interesting face and manner, appeared, bringing me cheese and four small loaves. He had been sent by his parents, Arab Catholics, who, hearing that a pilgrim had arrived, hastened to provide for my wants. It would be impossible to express how deeply I was impressed by this charitable attention. The knowledge of the great misery which existed throughout the whole country, the poverty of this very family, the anxiety of the little messenger when he made me a sign to eat, and the joy displayed on his expressive countenance at having executed the commission entrusted to him by his parents, all touched me beyond words, and moved me even to tears. In the evening he again appeared, bringing gifts similar to those of the morning. He saluted me, laid his offering at my feet, and was going away; I offered him payment, which he obstinately refused, and only yielded finally through

fear of giving me pain. Alas! what was my generosity, in the sight of God, compared to that shown by these poor Arabs towards an utter stranger, whom they had never seen before, and whom, in all probability, they were never to see again."—*Pilgrimage to Jerusalem*, Letter xliv.

THIRTIETH DAY.

Happiness promised to the Peace-makers and to those who suffer Persecution for Justice' sake.

"Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. v.) Blessed they who love peace and who promote it amongst others. I am "the God of peace" (1 Thess. v. 23); in My infinite bounty "I make my sun to rise upon the good and bad, and rain upon the just and the unjust" (Matt. v. 45). I came into the world "to preach peace to you that were afar off, and peace to them that were nigh" (Ephes. ii. 17), "making peace through the Blood of My Cross, both as to the things on earth and the things that are in heaven" (Col. i. 20). If, then, you desire to be a child worthy of My adoption, and to be crowned with glory hereafter, be peaceable; let no words fall from your lips but those of conciliation and peace; study to soften down all bitterness in the breasts of others; try always to put a stop to malicious reports, and, as far as you can, to prevent their evil effect; endeavor to heal all differences, coldnesses, and suspicions; to

reconcile, in a word, and bring together in the bonds of charity all over whom your influence extends.

"Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v.) This, My child, is the most perfect of the beatitudes, and the one which your Saviour has most fully exemplified in His life on earth. "Be glad, then, and rejoice when they shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly for My sake, for your reward shall be very great in heaven" (Matt. v.) Bear patiently with contempt, abuse, threats, and violence; animated by the consoling thought that you thus conform yourself to My example, and are successfully laboring to attain to the kingdom of heaven. Remember that I have undergone for you far more painful trials, and that in your greatest straits I am ever with you to strengthen, encourage, and reward your efforts. And if you should have to combat in the secret of your own heart against the assaults of the enemy and of your own corrupt nature, still repel with courage the persecution of bad thoughts and desires, the persecution of weariness and aridity in My service; these also are persecutions suffered for justice' sake, and entitle you to the heavenly reward.

Reflection.—Have I hitherto fulfilled the duties of a true, peace-loving Christian? Have I taken care to avoid all that would disturb the

peace of those around me, tried to repress my temper, been watchful over my words, and guarded in my actions, so as to give no cause of offence to those with whom I am brought in contact? Have I sought on every occasion to calm angry feelings, to promote amity, and join all together in a holy union, which is the fruit of evangelical charity? Have I made sacrifices to preserve peace with those disposed to quarrel, given up my own petty interests, rights, self-love, for the sake of this peace? To bend my rebellious nature to the requirements of a love of peace, have I accustomed myself to bear the cross; to walk manfully in the narrow way that leadeth to eternal life; to sustain the weight of temptation which it is the lot of man to bear here below? Behold, Jesus, my Divine Model, goes before, treading the way of trial and suffering, bearing the cross; can I, then, expect to attain to glory by any other road than that of Calvary? Courage! then, these are the days of "labor and vexation of spirit" (Eccl. i. 14). Other days shall come, of which there shall be no end, when we shall reap the reward in the repose and "joy of the Lord" (Matt. xxii.)

PRACTICE.—1. In order to maintain this evangelical peace, make the following your invariable rule of conduct: To angry words give no reply; to uncharitable reports, no credence; to disputes, no attention; and to injuries, no retaliation. To do this will cost you

much, but it will make you worthy of the Heart of Jesus, which saved you only at the expense of much patience and charity. 2. What difficulty soever you may have to undergo in the practice of virtue, whatsoever struggles you may have to endure in combating with the world, the devil, or your own self, seek consolation from the thought that you are following in the footsteps of Jesus, your adorable Chief, and are on the road to heaven, to which the cross shall obtain admittance for you.

EXAMPLE.

Spirit of Peace and Christian Patience displayed by a holy Superior of a Seminary.

M. de Lantages, priest of St. Sulpice, and first Superior of the Seminary of Notre-Dame-du-Puy, kept a continual guard over himself, in order to preserve in his heart the spirit of peace, sweetness, and patience. He felt a particular satisfaction in repeating frequently the words of St. Paul: "The Lord direct our hearts in the charity of God, and the patience of Christ!" (2 Thess. iii. 5), and it was easy to perceive the happy effects which the words of the apostle produced in him on all occasions. When, through the negligence of servants, he was, in his old age, left often without such things as he required, or had to wait for several hours before they were provided for him, he contented himself by saying, "I would be angry, but that I know how much worse I

myself serve the good God." A servant who attended him for twelve years testifies that he never knew him to be cross, ill-tempered, or even impatient. Though he acutely felt the insults he received, he never showed it either in his words or acts, having, by constant vigilance and the help of divine grace, acquired a complete control over himself. When his most holy actions were impeached, and he was attacked by the most unjust calumnies, in place of complaining or refuting his enemies, he simply replied to those who informed him of them, "I desire reputation only in as far as may be needful for the service of God, and to fulfil the duties that He requires of me. I am convinced He will preserve my fair fame as far as will be necessary for these ends; and should His Providence permit me to be altogether deprived of it, it will be a sign that He no longer requires my services, and so I shall be content."—*Life of M. de Lantages.*

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

Habitual Union between the faithful Soul and the Most Sacred Heart.

I have now explained to you, My child, the principal virtues which should characterize the conduct of a true Christian. You understand how you should practise detachment from creatures, meekness, resignation under afflictions, mercy, zeal for justice and perfection, purity of heart, love of peace, and loyal con-

stancy in enduring persecution for justice's sake. If you faithfully accomplish these duties, you shall be pleasing in My sight, you shall become a cherished member of My mystic body, and a well-beloved child of My Divine Heart. I wish now to teach you how pious souls apply themselves to establish and preserve an habitual union with Me. A heart wholly devoted to Mine continually burns with the heavenly fire with which My Heart is consumed. It sanctifies all its acts by aiming at an imitation of Mine whilst on earth; it acts by Me, that is, under the impulse of My grace and love; it acts for Me, seeking My glory in all things and the accomplishment of My Will. When alone, it unites itself to the solitude of its Jesus, when, retired from the world, and separated even from My disciples, I "went out into a mountain to pray, and passed the whole night in the prayer of God" (Luke vi. 12). When occupied with the bustle and business of the world, it unites itself to Me conversing with the sons of men (Prov. viii.) and addressing to them words of grace and truth (John i.) But it is especially in its exercises of piety that the devoted heart most intimately unites itself to Me as "the Author and Finisher of faith" (Heb. xii. 2), as the Source, Object, and Term of all religion. Thus it prays ever in My name, offering to the Eternal Father the all-powerful mediation of the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed mankind to God in

His blood (Apoc. v. 9). My child, "Look and make according to the pattern" (Exod. xxv. 40).

REFLECTION.—This life of intimate union with the Heart of Jesus would be at once a beautiful proof of love for Him, and the source of numberless graces and blessings for me. To live with Jesus, in Jesus, and for Jesus, what a sweet and happy life! what a rich harvest of glory and eternal felicity shall it secure to me hereafter! To lead such a life, no doubt there is need of a great and generous love which will unite the affections, and all the powers of the soul to the Heart of our Divine Master. But shall I not be amply recompensed for these efforts and this love, even in this life, by the sweet consolation of being entirely His, Who alone has a sovereign right to my heart; and by the happiness of knowing that, if I be in the state of grace, each act, of which my life is made up, being performed in union with the Divine Mediator, assures me so many degrees of an eternal recompense, such as "the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive"? (1 Cor. ii. 9).

PRACTICE.—1. When you look upon a picture of the Heart of Jesus, draw closer the bonds of love which unite your heart to that of your amiable Saviour. 2. Habituate yourself to this union of yourself to His adorable dispositions, and renew it at the commencement of your principal actions. For a loving

heart, there is great sweetness in these pious aspirations and efforts to become more like to its Divine Model.

EXAMPLE.

Habitual Union of a Soul with her Divine Master.

Nothing could be more edifying than the interior dispositions of Armelle Nicholas, a pious servant-maid, who died in Vannes in 1671, enriched with heavenly graces and blessings. "Divine love," she said in reference to her daily occupations—Divine love has come to be so habitually in my view that from morning to night I have no thought of anything else, and if perchance I become distracted, I immediately recall myself to the holy presence of my God. When I awake, I throw myself into the arms of my Divine Saviour, as a child into those of an affectionate parent, and I arise with the motive of serving Him and laboring to please him. I then, should time permit, place myself on my knees, and address Him as if I beheld Him actually with my eyes. I offer myself unreservedly to Him, begging that His Adorable Will may be perfectly accomplished in me, and that He would not permit me to offend Him even in the slightest degree. Often I am so occupied during the entire day that I cannot find time to recite even a short prayer, but my heart is always just as content to work for God as to pray for Him, since He has taught me every-

thing done for his sake is in reality a prayer. At my work my Jesus is still with me; at my meals, He seems to present each morsel to me; and at the recollection of how tenderly His Providence provides for my wants, my gratitude increases, and my love becomes more and more inflamed. When people speak ill of me and persecute me, and when the devil tempts me by vain artifices, I at once have recourse to my loving Saviour; He seems to point to His Heart, with Its Wound open, to shelter and protect me, and I hide myself in this Sacred Wound as in a citadel, and feel stronger than hell itself. When night comes, I lay myself down to rest, as a child on the bosom of its mother, praising and blessing the infinite Goodness that so lovingly watches over me, a miserable creature. O infinite Bounty of my God, how great is Thy love! What a blessed union will that be which shall never be interrupted! O my God! 'I live, now not I; but Thou deignest to live in me'" (Gal. ii. 20).—*Holy Lives in the Humble Classes, by Abbé Carron.*

THIRTY-SECOND DAY.

The manner in which everything may serve to remind us continually of our Divine Saviour.

Besides teaching you, My child, to sanctify all your actions by uniting them with Mine, I wish also to teach you to behold Me in everything and every place, so that your heart may be

continually directed to Mine. As the eyes of My Providence are ever open to the perception of your wretchedness and weakness, so also are the eyes of My Love ever directed on your soul, which I have prized beyond life itself. O My dear child, if you loved Me, you would understand how to make all created things so many pious symbols to remind you of your Jesus and His love! In the immensity of the heavens you would admire the infinity of My perfections; in the majestic orb of day you would contemplate My greatness and glory; the element of fire would symbolize the ardor of My charity; the food you use would serve to recall the Divine Bread, which I bequeathed to you at My last supper; and those things that possess perfume, brightness, and beauty would remind you of "the good odor of Christ unto God" (2 Cor. ii. 15), and the sweet charms of My ineffable beauty. If you loved Me, how would the services of the Church affect your soul and elevate it above the thoughts of this lower world! "These altars," you would say, "these sacred vessels, these vestments, are employed in the perpetual renewal of that most astonishing miracle of the love of God for men." "How awful is this place," how venerable this sanctuary! Here my Jesus deigns to offer himself each day for me, to nourish me with his very Flesh and Blood; here He condescends to take up His permanent abode, and awaits my visits, His whole desire being to pour down on me the

gifts and graces of His mercy and His love. Here it is that the child of wrath becomes, by Baptism, the adopted son of the Eternal Father; here the sinner, humbling himself at the feet of God's minister, has the blessed sentence of absolution pronounced over him; here, in fine, Jesus speaks to me, and instructs me by the mouth of the ministers of His Word. If you loved Me, My child, you would recognize Me in "these My least brethren," and would be mindful of My words: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these, you did it to me" (Matt. xxv. 40). In your superiors you would recognize Me as your Father; in your equals, as your friend and brother; and in the ministers of My sanctuary, as your pastor and preceptor. The sight of the poor would remind you of my voluntary poverty, their sickness and sufferings would remind you of My Passion, and the other many pains and trials of which My mortal life was made up. Thus would you make all things remind you of your Jesus, and advance you daily more and more in His love.

REFLECTION.—Happy, thrice happy, the heart that sees in all things and everywhere the image of the Divine Jesus, and that makes use of this easy and most ready means of continually recalling His Sacred Presence, and thereby making progress in the sweet ways of His love! No, I have no need "to go up to heaven to bring it," to find that which my heart should alone prize; nor is it necessary that I

should "cross the sea to bring it" (Deut. xxx. 12, 13). He is, indeed, very nigh unto me. Nigh, do I say? Is He not actually in me? Yes, everything in me ought to recall the presence of Jesus, and the remembrance of His wonderful Goodness; this tongue, on which His Adorable Body has so often reposed; this heart, which has so frequently served Him as a throne and sanctuary after Communion; my whole being, which has in some sort been identified with this loving Saviour. Ought I not, then, say with the apostle, that "our bodies are the members of Christ" (1 Cor. vi. 15), "Who abideth in me and I in Him" (John vi. 57)? Ought I not henceforth to live as in the sensible and continual presence of this Divine Guest, so loving, so amiable, but Who, unfortunately, is so little loved?

PRACTICE.—1. Never pass a church in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved without reverentially saluting our Divine Lord, and offering Him a little prayer or aspiration. 2. When you see a priest, recollect the immense benefits that Jesus confers on you through his ministry, and the wonderful powers entrusted to him.

EXAMPLE.

The Manner in which Armelle Nicholas made everything serve to raise her Thoughts to God.

"When I behold," says this pious lover of Jesus, "one of those faithful animals which never quit their master, which, for a morsel of food, overwhelm him with caresses to express

their thanks, oh! what a powerful lesson this teaches me of thankfulness to my God, Who has attached me to His service by so many favors! When I behold the gentle lambs, which allow themselves to be led unresistingly to the slaughter, I think of my Saviour, Who was so conducted to death for love of me, and Who has left me an example of how I am to act when I meet with contradictions difficult to human nature. When I see the little chickens take shelter under their mother's wing, I immediately call to mind how my Jesus has compared His love to that of this bird, in order to inspire me with confidence in Him, and to teach me to take refuge under the wings of His Providence from the assaults of the demon. Contemplating the loveliness of the meadows and verdure of the fields, with their innumerable flowers, I say within myself: My Beloved is as 'the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys' (Cant. ii.) I invite Him to make my soul the garden of His delights, and to keep it so enclosed and sealed that none but Himself shall find entry there. When I see the trees bending with the wind, and the sea which remains within its allotted bounds, 'O God!' I exclaim, 'why am I not similarly docile to the motions and inspirations of Thy Divine Spirit!' When in the morning from a small spark I kindle a large fire, I say, 'O Love! if we would only allow Thee to act thus in our souls, how Thou wouldst inflame them in like manner! At harvest-time, when I see the good grain

separated from the chaff, I say to myself, 'So shall it be with the good and the wicked on the day of judgment.' In short, there is nothing that does not serve to instruct me and awaken pious reflections within me; therefore I often say to God: 'O my God! how wonderfully hast Thou made up to me for my ignorance. I know not even how to read, yet, by Thy grace, everything around me instructs me so well that I have but to behold them to feel how amiable Thou art, and to raise my thoughts to Thee!'" —*Holy Lives in the Humble Classes, by Abbé Carron.*

THIRTY-THIRD DAY.

Zeal for the Interests of the Sacred Heart.

If, My child, you faithfully correspond with the lessons I have taught you during this month of grace and benediction, you will be well pleasing in My sight. But if you be fully penetrated with love of Me, this fire will spread beyond yourself; you will be animated with a holy desire to envelope all hearts in this celestial flame, which "I came to cast upon the earth" (Luke xii. 49). You can do much by example; "so let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven" (Matt. v. 16); let others see in you the reflection of My virtues, so that they may say: Behold a true disciple of Jesus; they will thus be led to glorify Me in the virtues which shine forth in your conduct, and be induced to imitate you. You can do much by prayer: offer fervent,

humble petitions for all, but especially for sinners, whose conversion so eminently displays My mercy, and causes such "joy before the Angels of God" (Luke xv. 10). You can procure many precious graces for them; "For the continual prayer of a just man availeth much" (James v. 16). You can do much also by your words; take advantage of every occasion that offers to make known, with prudent zeal, to your fellow-Christians, how much I love them, how deserving I am of their love, how sweet My yoke is and My burden light (Matt. xi. 30); above all, what consolation and happiness await those who dedicate themselves unreservedly to My Sacred Heart. Let your zeal also be manifested in an eagerness to spread the devotion to My Divine Heart. When I inspired the establishment of this devotion, I desired to give to my Church, laid waste by the ravages of heresy and the growing cold of the charity of many (Matt. xxiv. 11), a new pledge of My tender love. It is My delight to shower down My graces in abundance on those who, touched by the love with which I am consumed, endeavor to testify their gratitude to Me, and who, justly grieved by all I have suffered, and still suffer from sinners, in the sacrament of the altar, labor to make Me reparation for these indignities and outrages. To such as these I love to say, as I said formerly to My beloved disciples: "You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations; I dispose to you, as My Father

hath disposed to Me, a kingdom, that you may . . . sit upon thrones" (Luke xxii. 28, 29). Grand, magnificent promise! to be filled with the delights of My kingdom, and made to share in My Own happiness and glory. My child, could I give you more?

REFLECTION.—He who has no zeal has no love. Alas! how little, then, have I loved my Divine Saviour, since I have done so little for the glory of His Sacred Heart! Ah! could I not often, at least by my words and example, inspire others with devotion, direct their thoughts to Jesus, prevent His being offended, dispose those to return to Him, the Source of true life, who, unfortunately, have been straying away? . . . and yet I have not done so. And what might I not have done by my prayers! Had I fervently appealed to the Sacred Heart in behalf of the souls redeemed by His Precious Blood, what good might I not have done for those enslaved in sin, what help might I not have afforded to the poor sufferers in purgatory! How much more, also, might I not have done in reparation of the offences so constantly offered Him! How many times might I visit Him, to offer Him my heart in homage for those unworthy Christians who inflict such injuries upon Him! O Jesus! I am guilty, too guilty; after all the favors thou hast heaped upon me, ought I not to have shown some little zeal for the promotion of Thy honor and the interests so dear to Thy heart? Oh! may I for the future, and to my last

breath, love Thee without reserve, and, by my fervor, make Thee amends for my own past ingratitude and that of those who forget and offend Thee!

PRACTICE.—1. Bring others, as much as possible, to understand the love of Jesus for mankind, and, as far as circumstances permit, promote devotion to the Sacred Heart. 2. Each Friday, or, at least, on the first Friday of each month, perform some act of self-denial in reparation for the outrages which Jesus deigns to suffer for us in the Blessed Sacrament, and recite, if possible, before the tabernacle, a fervent act of reparation.

EXAMPLE.

Consecration of the City of Marseilles to the Divine Heart of Jesus.

A vessel coming from the shores of the Levant in May, 1720, spread through all France the dreadful scourge of the plague. The malady showed itself in the commencement of July, and soon made rapid progress. Nearly all Provence became infected. But it was at Marseilles that the disease raged with greatest fury. It was increased by the heat of summer, which is very great in that locality. The malady soon made fearful ravages; the number of those stricken with it increased every day. In this desperate situation, in which pity was stifled by fear, and every one trembled for himself, the city was fortunate enough to contain some intrepid and charitable souls, who feared

not danger, or had fortitude to brave it. The clergy especially showed themselves worthy of their august ministry. The parochial clergy and the religious rivalled each other in their zeal and devotedness. Assiduous in their attendance on the sick, they brought to all the helps of religion. The Bishop of Marseilles, Monseigneur de Belzunce, sustained the others by his example. So far from yielding to the advice of the timid, he remained amidst his flock, discharging towards them the functions of the father and pastor, visiting the sick, aiding the poor, and displaying a courage inspired by a heroic charity. He escaped, but no less than 250 priests and religious fell victims to their zeal, and the disease carried off, in the neighborhood, about 50,000 souls.

On the 7th September, whilst the plague was at its height, the authorities of the city drew up a solemn engagement, binding themselves to establish and endow a hospital for orphans. On the festival of All Saints, Mgr. de Belzunce made a public procession to appease the anger of God. He walked with a rope round his neck, barefooted, and bearing a cross in his hands, and at the conclusion celebrated the Holy Mysteries on an altar erected in the open air. Having exhorted his people to propitiate Heaven by their prayers, he consecrated the city to the Heart of Jesus; those present promised solemnly, in the name of their fellow-citizens, to assist at Mass each year on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, and to perform in

the evening a public procession in thanksgiving for the cessation of the plague—a ceremony which was punctually observed until interrupted by the Revolution, and was revived after the Restoration. From that day no one died from the plague, and the city was delivered from it.—*Memoirs to serve for an Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i.

PRAYER.

To the M. H. Sacrament and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"See where Thy boundless love has reached, my loving Jesus! Thou, of Thy Flesh and Precious Blood, hast made ready for me a banquet whereby to give me all Thyself. Who drove Thee to this excess of love for me? Thy Heart, Thy loving Heart! O adorable Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of Divine love! within Thy sacred Wound take Thou my soul; that in that school of charity I may learn to love that God who has given me such wondrous proofs of His great love." Amen.

[An indulgence of 100 days, once a day, is granted to those who devoutly recite the above prayer. It is applicable to the relief of the suffering souls.—Pius VI., Nov. 7, 1787; Pius VII., Feb. 9, 1818.]

Visit to a Picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

An Indulgence of 7 years and 7 quarantines is granted to all the faithful as often as they contritely and devoutly visit a picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, exposed for public veneration in any church or oratory, and pray before it for some time, according to the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff (Pius VII. 2d January, 1799). Applicable.

Offering to be made before a Picture of the Sacred Heart.

"My amiable Jesus! as a pledge of my gratitude, and in reparation for my infidelities, I, N.N., give Thee my heart—I consecrate myself wholly to Thee, and, with Thy grace, I purpose never to offend Thee again."

An Indulgence of 100 days may be gained once a day by those who shall make the above offering, with a contrite heart, before a picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Also, a Plenary Indulgence once in the month by those who shall have performed this devotion daily during that space of time (Pius VII., 9th of June, 1807; 26th of September, 1817). Usual conditions. Applicable.

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